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HONDURAS: WILL THE REVOLUTION COME?

A Thesis presented to the Faculty of the U. S. Army Command and General Staff College in Partial Fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

by

HECTOR RENE FONSECA L., Major, FA, Honduran Army

Military School of Honduras, General Francisco Morazan, 1962 - 1967,
BS/BA, The American University, Washington, D.C., 1978 - 1981
U. S. Army Command and General Staff College, 1983.

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The purpose of this thesis is the examination of Honduras today from a socio-economic and politico-military perspective to determine what internal conditions exist which make Honduras prone or vulnerable to insurgency. The research concentrates on the internal factors for insurgency in Honduras. It surveys the internal conditions of the neighboring countries of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Nicaragua and the Soviet-Cuban strategies in Latin America as a contributing factor in nurturing revolution outside their own borders.

The research is based on historical records and comparative studies of revolutions. The analysis reveals that because of the present socio-economic and political conditions, Honduras does not present a target for insurgency from within. The author does not discount, however, the possibility that if the government abandons or reduces the intensity of its aggressive improvement programs, the insurgencies in neighboring countries may subsequently be the catalyst to allow or cause them to 'spill over' into Honduras.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the loyal and democratic-minded people of Honduras who struggle and persevere tirelessly for the peace and progress of our country.

It is also dedicated to those fellow soldiers whose true patriotism and devotion fervently commit them to the achievement of these objectives.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Nothing can be more challenging and rewarding than, by means of historical research, attempting to analyze the phenomena which causes the series of events affecting one's own country. Although not all these events reach the front pages of the world news, they are significant and important to the people of Honduras.

Starting in the mid-1970s, Central America became an area of increasing socio-economic and politico-military instability. That instability resulted from both a serious collapse of the global economy (obviously affecting not only Central America, but almost all nations of the world) and political fragmentation in the internal structure of the countries. Therefore, the origins of the unrest in Central America can be distilled into two major areas: political and economic. Dr Richard Millett, a well known scholar, remarks:

> A major cause of Central America's political violence is the collapsing regional economy. The region has fallen into a classic vicious circle; economic problems contribute to a political instability which, in turn, aggravates the economic situation.... The situation has damaged the prospects for moderate political factions in the region and has contributed to a steady political polarization.[1]

The current situation of increasing terrorism, kid-

nappings, refugee camps, covert arms networks, bombings, and the potential development of Marxist-led insurgencies in El Salvador, Guatemala, and potentially Honduras, call for a unified integrated effort to avert the regional threat.

The Problem

Since the 1969 war against El Salvador, Honduras has been struggling to overcome its internal socio-economic and political problems. Although not exempted from internal political instability, Honduras has achieved, by Central American standards, some relative stability and it has implemented some social and economic reforms aimed toward the less advantaged segments of the population. A few years ago Honduras was called "an oasis of peace" by Mr. Ralph E. Becker, former United States Ambassador. Today, however, the situation has deteriorated somewhat. The Army's specially trained units locate and raid insugent's hideouts regularly. These insurgents are infiltrating into Honduras from El Salvador and Nicaragua. Honduran soldiers are now commonly seen guarding banks, government institutions, power plants, airports, and factories in an effort to avert terrorist actions. External sources of capital are reluctant to invest in the country given the uncertain conditions and large amounts of domestic capital are flowing out of Honduras. These abrupt changes

may lead one to believe that Honduras is rapidly becoming a place where revolutionary war is imminent.[2] However, the prospects of the Honduran government are not pessimistic as the present Administration of Suazo Cordoba has increased its efforts at improving the internal socio-economic conditions of the country and in maintaining peace with the neighboring governments of Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala. While the government recognizes the potential threat from within, if it fails to implement internal improvement projects, it must also reckon with the external factors which further influence, support, or encourage revolutionary movements. Relevant external factors include recent revolution in Nicaragua which brought the Sandinistas to power, the ongoing insurgencies in El Salvador, and Guatemala. These make Honduras a potential target for subversion supported from abroad. Honduras has some advantages over those three countries because the land and the wealth are more equally distributed in Honduras. Moreover, its elected civilian government and its Armed Forces (led by General Gustavo Alvarez Martinez), appear to work in harmony pursuing mutually agreed upon national interests. In the past, this cooperation was never achieved because of the hostility between the military and the civilian political parties. The differences, if overcome completely, offer bright hope for the future development of Honduras and the achievment of peace.

Purpose

The purpose of this thesis is to examine Honduras today from a socio-economic and politico-military perspective to determine what internal conditions exist which make Honduras prone or vulnerable to insurgency. The investigation will concentrate primarily on the internal factors which create the conditions for insurgency.

Methods and Procedures

The research will be historical and comparative; it will look at the conditions of Honduras in a systematic and objective manner by collecting, evaluating, and analyzing relevant information. The research will rely heavily on the following: books, articles in newspapers and magazines, interviews, government publications, dissertations, theses and papers, United States Army Command and General Staff College publications, experiences of the faculty and classmates at the same, the personal experiences of the author, and the guidance of both the thesis committee and consulting faculty.

Organization

This thesis will be divided into five chapters as follows:

-Chapter One will lay out the problem, the purpose of the investigation, the methods and procedures of the re-

search, and how the study will be organized.

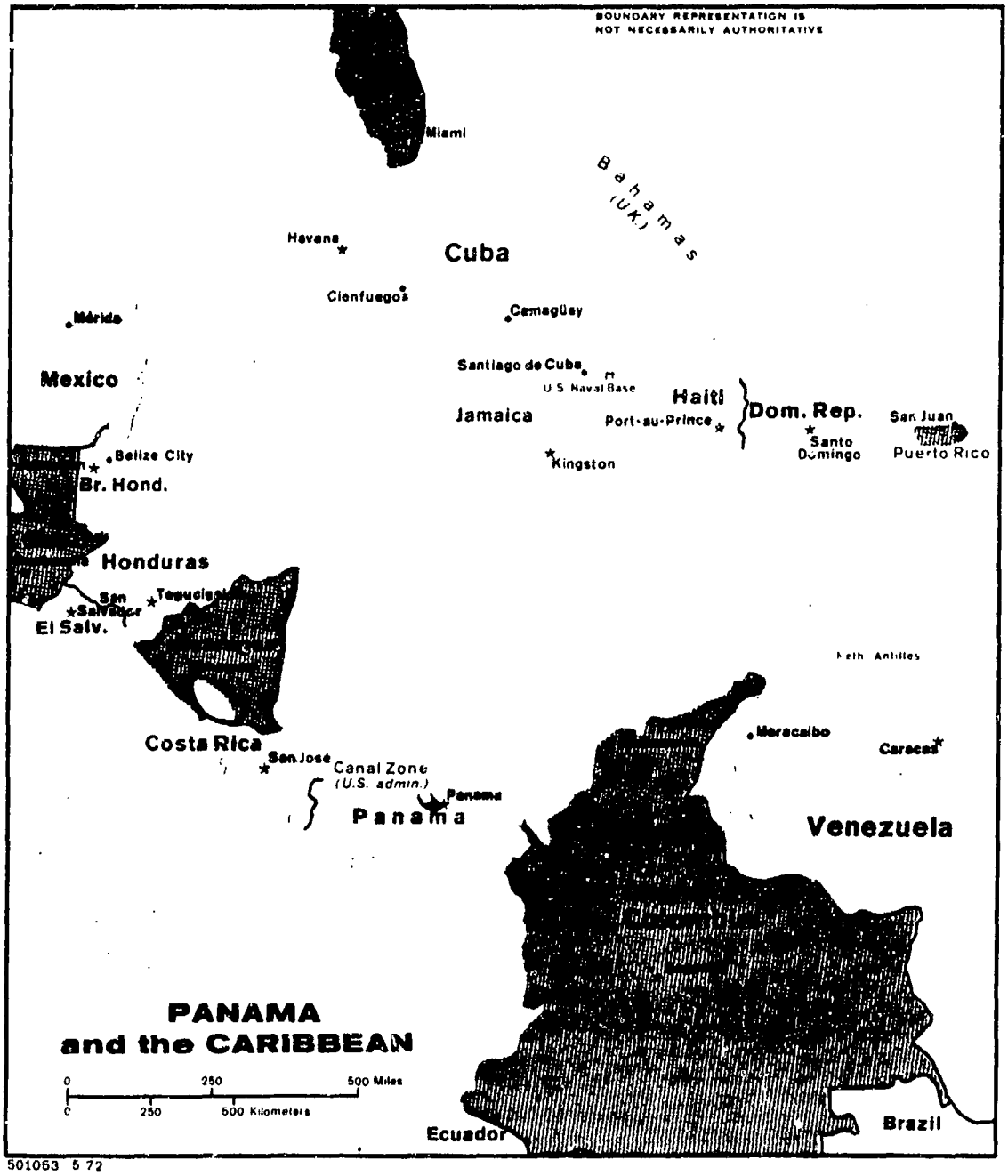
-Chapter Two will address the current socio-economic conditions of Honduras, paying substantial attention to the rural and urban population; the land distribution; the living conditions under which most Hondurans live; the economic factors which have shaped the Honduran economy; the favorable and unfavorable conditions facing the government; and general updated economic data in the form of tables.

-Chapter Three will deal with the politico-military analysis of Honduras concentrating on its present political conditions. Furthermore, it will also examine militarism in Honduras from 1963 to the present.

-Chapter Four will address external factors represented by the neighboring countries of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Nicaragua with which Honduras shares borders. It will focus on the socio-economic and political elements that characterize each country. At the end of the chapter it will examine the Soviet-Cuban strategies in Latin America as an additional destabilizing factor in Central America.

-Chapter Five will concentrate on the basic characteristics of revolutionary movements in Honduras. In this analysis I shall examine the interrelationships between the potential causes for unrest noted in Chapters 2, 3, and 4, and the revolutionary movements themselves.

MAP 1 - CENTRAL AMERICA



NOTES

[1]Richard Millett, The Central American Cauldron, Article Published by the Southern Illinois University, February 1983. p. 69

[2]Linda Schuster, "A New Battleground for Central America", The Wall Street Journal, (Sept 28, 1982), p. 23

CHAPTER TWO

INTERNAL FACTORS: SOCIO-ECONOMIC ANALYSIS OF HONDURAS

INTRODUCTION

The preceding chapter generally was devoted to a preliminary description of the problem of ongoing subversions in Central America, the methodology, research techniques, and organization. In this chaper, I will focus primarily on the target state: Honduras, and the conditions under which most Hondurans live. To this end I have compiled documents and primary sources from both analysts of, and direct perticipants in, the series of events that affect contemporary Honduras. The analysis is intended to provide sufficient information and data about Honduras to enable us to determine what conditions exist which make Honduras vulnerable to insurgency.

Since the transistion from military to civilian government in February 1982, no important change has occurred in the fundamental development problems facing the country, basically economic and social in nature. However, the government of Doctor Roberto Suaze Cordova expects to face increased political challenges and associated pressures given the unrest in the neighboring countries of Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala.

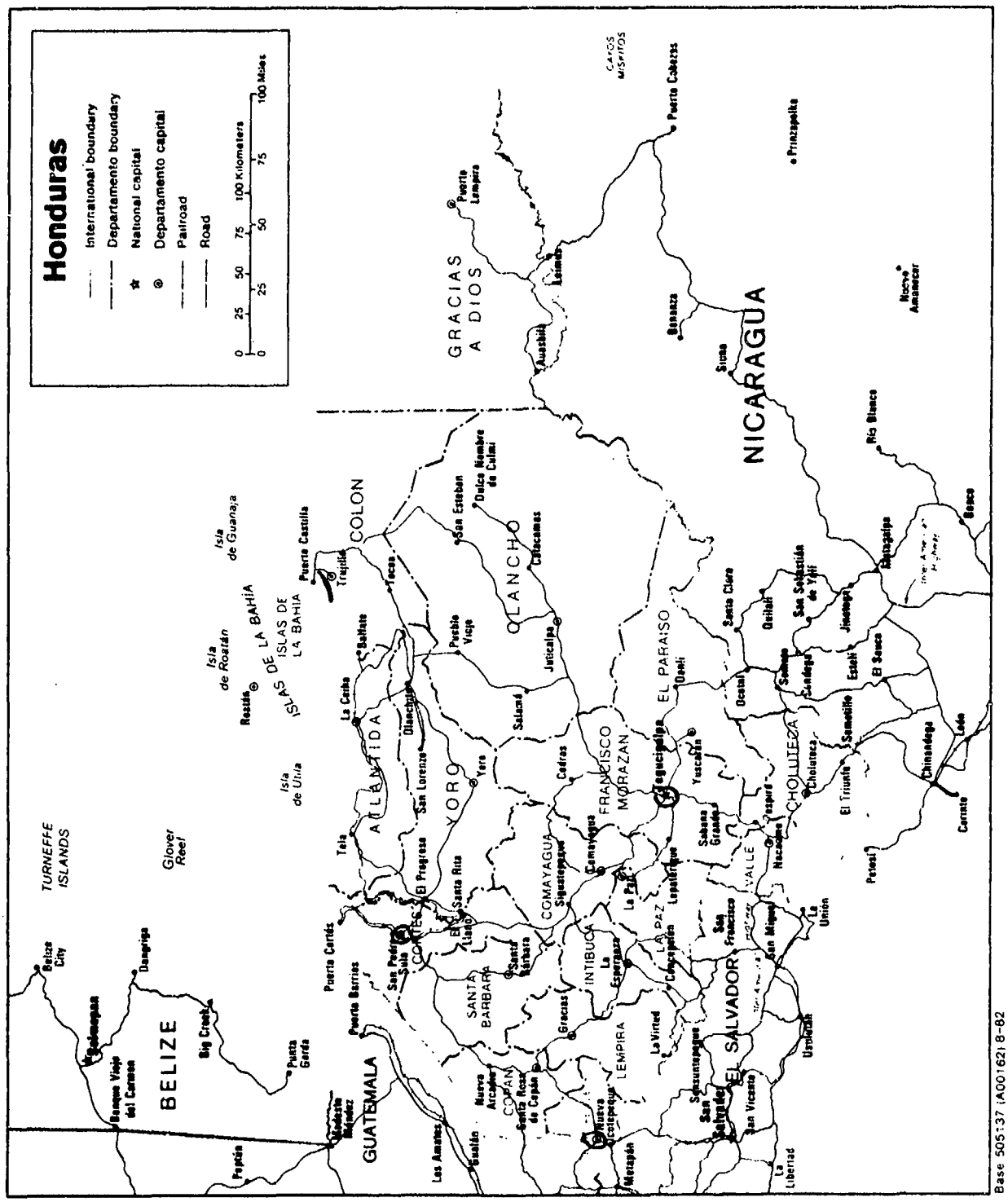
Because of all the activities occuring in neighboring countries, the government of Honduras continues to believe that it must implement internal plans with short range im-

pact on the social situation facing the less advantaged segments of its population. Plans call for accelerated progress on social development projects and increased attention to quick payoff productive plans coupled with a program to increase government revenues.[1]

Slow export performance, rising oil prices, reduced access to commercial lending from abroad, primitive agricultural methods, and a decline in national as well as overseas capital investments have been the burdens on the Honduran economy which must be overcome in order to comply with the increasing demands of the population for better living conditions.

The military government of Honduras was successful in completing the transition to a civilian government of a moderate nature in 1982 after almost eighteen years in power. Its success will depend on its ability to convince the people that its development efforts are bearing fruit.

MAP 2 - HONDURAS



LIVING CONDITIONS

Poverty in Honduras has its roots in the history, geography, and limited resources of the country. Honduras has always been geographically isolated from the rest of the countries in the region due to its fractured mountainous geography and relatively sparse population, which combined, have made transportation and communications with the rest of the area difficult. The lack of domestic capital has not allowed for funding of the infrastructure needed to integrate the isolated population with the outside world.

The transcontinental railroad lines that linked the highlands of Costa Rica, Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala with both the Atlantic and Pacific oceans allowed the development of export agriculture beyond the costal areas. Similar systems were not developed in Honduras because its terrain is even more rugged than the others. Further, the low population density and less fertile soils for coffee production and other agriculture, in general, limited Honduras' ability to finance such infrastructure.[2]

The mineral resources of the country, on the other hand, offer great potential for development; although some minerals such as gold, silver, and copper have been exploited since colonial times, there is still ample ore to justify expensive smelter investments. Petroleum exploration has

covered some areas, but no commercially exploitable discoveries have been made to date.[3]

Compounding the problems of lack of industrial and infrastructure development is the fact that land in the traditional areas is historically unequally distributed both in terms of quality and in quantity. In addition, some tropical diseases such as malaria and dystentery have made the colonization of available lowland areas relatively unattractive. Small farmers in the traditional areas who have been able to get at least three hectares of land producing coffee have prospered and are no longer below the poverty level. However, most farmers in these areas do not have the land or capital needed to reach that threshold, and are limited to subsistence-type farming while others are left with no alternative but to sell their labor to the larger landholders rather than being able to play an entrepreneurial role in the more attractive and profitable product markets.[4]

Then, too, the government policies have not been particularly effective in dealing with the problems of rural areas. For political and bureaucratic reasons, the school system focuses first on the highly populated centers while the more costly and less attractive rural areas are poorly served.

The principal cause of urban poverty is irregular and unstable employment. Rural dwellers move to the urban areas with the expectation of finding more favorable employment, and

perhaps the educational and health services, as well as the other amenities of larger communities. However, migrants are about as likely to be unemployed or underemployed in the city as they were in the countryside. They also are as likely to be poorly housed and malnourished, but they do have better access to education and health services.

The flow of migrants in Honduras is from the rural areas first to small towns, then to larger cities. However, this migration has not accelerated as rapidly in Honduras as it has in such neighboring countries as El Salvador and Guatemala, nor has it produced the magnitude of social ills found elsewhere.[6] Thus, Honduras still has an opportunity to influence the pattern of rural-urban migration and urban regional development to achieve an orderly development of its urban service centers that will contribute to the socio-economic development of rural areas and slow the deterioration in urban living conditions.

ECONOMIC OVERVIEW

The problems which have impacted upon the Honduran economy in the last two decades are: unfavorable terms of trade with trading partners, lack of confidence of private capital to reinvest profits in the country, and the country's inability to bring foreign capital into the economy. All of these problems have been exacerbated during the past three years. However, the basic underlying structure of the economy is sound and although the deterioration in the foreign sector and the political problems of the region that have eroded confidence in the country and reduced the proclivity of foreign banks and industry to invest in Honduras, are serious, the weakening is a temporary phenomena which can still be corrected.[7]

The Honduran economy is an export economy built on a primary productive base of tropical and subtropical agriculture, forestry, and to a lesser degree, mining. As in virtually all developing economies, the primary sector's share of output is slipping while the manufacturing sector's share is rising. Manufacturing has grown substantially in the last decade, with real growth rates in excess of 10% per year being observed in the four years prior to 1980. The agriculture sector's share of output declined from 37.6% to 30.9% within the last two decades.[8]

Honduras has a very open economy. Nearly 40% of

its gross national product (GNP) is accounted for by foreign trade. Principal exports in 1980 were coffee (25% of exports) and bananas (26% of exports). Other categories accounting for 5% to 10% of export value were beef, wood, and minerals. Miscellaneous unclassified exports, mostly light manufactured goods, have grown rapidly in recent years, and in 1980 totalled 15% of export value.[9]

Corn and beans are grown principally for domestic consumption, but in recent years significant quantities have been exported unofficially in response to higher prices in neighboring countries, specifically, El Salvador and Nicaragua.[10]

Honduras' status as the only country in the region with a freely convertible currency during most of 1980 encouraged residents of other Central American countries to devise schemes to acquire Honduran currency (Lempiras) then convert it immediately to US dollars. Also, Honduras financed more than $25 million in exports to Nicaragua during 1980, paying Lempiras to Honduran exporters and taking IOUs of dubious collectibility from the Nicaraguan Central Bank. Short term capital movement (capital flight) is estimated to have totalled $25 million in the balance of payments accounts. As a result, a $66 million loss in official reserves was recorded in 1980.[11]

At the end of 1980, the government found it necessary

to impose some mild restrictive measures to better control access to and use of foreign exchange. For example, limits on over-the-counter sales were established and commercial banks have been asked not to open letters of credit for Honduran residents who are not known as bona fide importers. The central bank also requires the submission of import or other documentation before releasing hard currencies in order to curb capital flight and discourage non-legitimate imports.[12]

THE POPULATION

The population of Honduras is about 3.8 million and composed of 90% mestizos (a mixture of European and Indian), 5% black, 2% caucasian, 2% Arab and Orientals, and 1% Indian. While these figures may be somewhat variable, they serve to provide a base for our purpose. The vast majority of Hondurans are poor. Their productivity as a group is low; their alternatives for employment are very limited and a great percentage of the population lives on the verge of malnutrition. The 1978 agricultural sector estimated that 64% of the urban and 90% of the rural population are poor who live on subsistence farming or occasional employment. Of the total population, approximately 2.9 million people fall within this category.[13]

THE RURAL POPULATION

The rural population is composed of two groups: traditional farmers and landless laborers. Approximately 35% of the rural families work in what is known as Pequenas Parcelas (minifundia) from where they obtain their basic subsistence and per capita income averages $135 per annum. The comparable income figures for the landless rural laborers, 47% of the total population, is only $63 per annum, earned by occasional employment in a variety of sectors ranging from small industry and commerce to small farms.[14] This last group be-

comes the most vulnerable to all the communist recruiters in the countryside. Moreover, they are prone to perform almost any kind of labor under the promise of money, fertile lands, and a better way of life. The promises may never materialize, but in what may be a vain attempt to better their lot in life, the disadvantaged still try.

According to the following 1979 statistics for Central America, Honduran and Costa Rican agricultural land resources were more equitably distributed than any other Central American country. The distribution of agricultural land resources for the five Central American countries is as follows.[15]

LAND DISTRIBUTION IN CENTRAL AMERICA, 1979 *

Percent of Land Area by Farm Size Category

Country	Farms With Less Than 35 Hectares	Farms With More Than 35 Hectares
Honduras**	44.8	55.2
Guatemala	37.6	62.4
El Salvador	35.5	64.5
Costa Rica	17.5	82.5
Nicaragua	13.4	85.3

*Figures based on 1970 data from Land Tenure Center Publications.

** Includes changes in land tenure status from Agriculture Reform Program.

LAND DISTRIBUTION IN CENTRAL AMERICA, 1979*

Percent of Rural Families by Farm Size Category

Country	Landless	Farms with Less Than 35 Has.	Farms with More Than 35 Has
Nicaragua	32.6	50.1	17.3
Guatemala	26.5	70.9	2.6
El Salvador	26.0	71.3	2.7
Honduras**	20.0	74.9	5.1
Costa Rica	5.6	73.1	21.3

*Figures based on 1970 data from Land Tenure Center Publications.
**Includes changes in Land Tenure status from Agricultural Reform Program. Pre-reform percentage of landless was 31.2%.

Based on these data, only 20% of the rural population in Honduras is landless whereas 26% of the Salvadoran and Guatemalan, and 32.6% of the Nicaraguan rural population are landless. The distribution of land, while still a serious problem, is more equitable in Honduras than in any other Central American country: 44.8% of the land is owned by the rural poor compared to 37.6% in Guatemala, 35.5% in El Salvador, 17.5% in Costa Rica, and 13.4% in Nicaragua. This land distribution has somewhat lessened the appeal of revolutionary propaganda. "Between 1970 and 1980, 9% of Honduran land was transferred to 11.2% of the rural population."[16] The quality of the land distributed is cultivable, but will require some fertilization.

The Agrarian reform in Honduras has been very effective with regard to land redistribution, but the primary obstacle is represented by the fact that the peasant has not been provided, along with the land, access to public capital

in the form of agricultural credit; the knowledge necessary to administer these credits, when provided; and finally, training in improved methods of agriculture. Most agrarian reform farmers were landless laborers or sharecroppers, but by grouping together in cooperatives, they have been able to sell their products to the government and obtain land under agrarian reform legislation.

THE URBAN POPULATION

According to present statistics, 40% of all Hondurans live in urban areas, but that percentage is expected to rise to 55% by the year 2000. With an average of five members per family, 54% of the 180,000 urban families reside in Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula, the two major cities. While the overall annual growth rate of the population is 3.5%, the two major cities are expanding at the rate of 6.2%. The bulk of this growth is in marginal neighborhoods, which are growing at approximately 12% per year. There are four major subgroups within the urban marginal population. Based on tenancy of dwellings, they are: 1) Renters of multi-family houses - 50.2%; 2) Squatters - 6.3%; 3) Renters of private houses - 10.3%; and 4) Owners - 33.2%.

The urban dwellers that live in marginal neighborhoods are not much better off than the rural poor. Their per capita income is only approximately $140 per year. Malnutrition is as high as in rural areas. The socio-economic situation in these neighborhoods is dynamic. For example, the barrios

around the market in Tegucigalpa are way stations which house recent rural immigrants who rent the houses from former slum dwellers who have moved to outlying neighborhoods. Thus, longer term residents who are upwardly mobile are replaced by newer immigrants who usually start at the bottom. A common phenomenon in marginal neighborhoods is well built cement block structures adjacent to wooden hovels. Usually, a hovel owner will improve his property in stages as his financial condition improved.[18]

The capital of marginal families is very limited. Housing within the means of marginal families is typically badly deteriorated due to lack of maintenance. Environmental sanitation is poor, leading to high rates of water-borne and air-borne diseases.

Basic needs such as food, water, and clothing are not adequately met. Access to information concerning legal rights and opportunities for betterment is limited. Employment opportunities are also limited and employment is frequently unstable. Self-employed artisans and small businessmen, among the marginal population, lack access to credit and the technology needed to improve and expand their enterprises.[18]

These urban groups also become easily accessible for insurgent recruiters. Whenever the Honduran security forces have conducted urban raids against subversive

cells, they have learned that a great majority of its members come from marginal neighborhoods, hold stable jobs, come from rural areas initially, and in some cases are either Salvadoran or Nicaraguan.[20]

The government, in conjunction with foreign agencies, is developing programs oriented to improve the living conditions of the marginal population in urban areas. The military, as well, has learned the value of civic action programs which aim at winning over the inhabitants of a troubled area so they will support the government and its forces rather than the urban guerillas. The same situation is valid for police forces. If the urban police do not make an effort at maintaining friendly relations with the inhabitants of a troubled area, such as a marginal neighborhood, those people are more likely to go underground and join or aid terrorists who are striking at the police and the established order. Guerillas in rural areas need the support of the peasantry. Likewise, urban guerillas must be assisted by local people if they are to be able to operate effectively and especially to evade the security forces.

Honduran ability to overcome urban terrorism is viewed by the government with a great deal of optimism. The latest terrorist operations have proven to be fiascos because of the timely and precise intervention by specially trained units and the effective penetration and elimination

of terrorist intelligence networks.[21]

FAVORABLE AND UNFAVORABLE ASPECTS

Honduras hopes to reach its immediate social, economic and political objectives within the next five years. These are to obtain a high rate of economic growth (with justice and greater equity), to pursue intensive development programs in conjunction with donor nations, to reach a per capita income of $880 by 1990, to reach peaceful settlements with Nicaragua, and to maintain freedom and democracy.

The following factors favor the achievement of these objectives: 1) The current government appears to have genuine support for its efforts from the population and the nation's private enterprise leaders; 2) There is relatively greater equity in the conditions of life in Honduras due to past government efforts in land reform and in the provision of social services; 3) There are no deep cultural or class differences among the population; 4) The attention to rationality in planning and administration is increasing; 5) There is acceptance of the utility of external assistance and foreign investment; 6) There is a relatively well developed labor union movement; and 7) There is a freedom of the press and freedom of enterprises.[22]

The following factors may affect or jeopardize the achievement of the objectives: 1) The number of well-trained

technicians and administrators is still quite small; 2) The ability to conduct analyses and to make decisions on how best to use scarce resources is still weak; 3) The public sector is not well organized, and is unable to hold well-trained persons in public service; 4) There is a tendency for the political parties to disregard technical qualifications in the appointment of key government persons, but consider only political militancy and loyalty; 5) Large public investments in infrastructure and social services are still required while the capacity of the government to tax and borrow is limited; 6) The political situation of the region is such that the future of Honduras is certain enough to justify large investments, and the government will likely have to devote much of its attention to security and political matters during the next few years; 7) Poor export performance due to world recession, rising imports, some capital flight, and lower growth of government revenues have combined to slow down economic growth at least temporarily; 8) The population is increasing at the rapid rate of 3.5% per year, and the government has not developed an effective strategy for dealing with the problems that such growth causes or for attempting to reduce the growth rate; 9) Forestry and other natural resources are being utilized in wasteful ways; 10) The country is subject to fairly frequent natural disasters such as floods, hurricanes, mild earthquakes, which can undo years of progress; and 11) Honduras is dependent on imports for all its petroleum.[23]

NOTES

[1]Agency for International Development, Honduras: Country Development Strategy Statement, (Washington, D.C., 1981), p. 1

[2]Stokes, William, Honduras: An Area Study in Government, (New York: The Profile Press, 1950), p. 12

[3]Honduras, Background Notes, (Washington, D.C.: United States Department of State, May 1982), p.3

[4]Agency, Op Cit., p. 10

[5]Ibid, p. 11

[6]Ibid, p. 11

[7]Ibid, p. 13

[8]Ibid, p. 13

[9]Ibid, p. 14

[10]Pons, Alcantara, The Central American Common Market, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966), p. 32

[11]Agency, Op Cit., p. 15

[12]Ibid, p. 16

[13]Ibid, p. 8

[14]Ibid, p. 3

[15]Ibid, p. 4

[16]Ibid, p. 6

[17]Banco Central de Honduras, Honduras en Cifras, (Tegucigalpa D. C. Departamento de Estuidios Economicos, 1980), p. 13

[18]Agency, Op Cit., p. 9

[19]Ibid, p. 9

[20]Interview with a member of the G-2 Section of the Army of Honduras, Tegucigalpa, December 23, 1982.

[21]Interview, Op Cit., Tegucigalpa, December 23, 1982.

[22]Ibid, p. 25

[23]Ibid, p. 27

CHAPTER THREE

INTERNAL FACTORS: POLITICO-MILITARY ANALYSIS OF HONDURAS

POLITICAL HISTORY

Christopher Columbus discovered Honduras in 1502. He stopped at several points along the north coast but did not establish a colony. It was not until March 1524 that Gil Gonzalez Davila established the first Spanish settlement in Honduras.[1]

Thereafter, progress in settlement and organization was very slowly accomplished. "Early Honduran government organization was haphazard and confused."[2] The King of Spain appointed Diego Lopez de Salcedo ruler of the province, but immediately upon arriving in October 1526, he left for Nicaragua to widen his influence.[3] At this time anarchy prevailed in Honduras. "Assassination and murder were common as Spaniard fought against Spaniard in an effort to win control of the government."[4]

Spain held control of Honduras for almost three centuries till 1821. One of the legacies from the Spaniards, which still exists, is that of violence. The leaders who shaped the Honduran history were the heirs of the eight century-long military crusade against the Moor. Consequently, "The American empire of the Spanish kings was born in violence, matured in violence, and died in violence."[5]

Honduras is a constitutional republic, but her constitutions have tended to be short-lived. "A total of twelve have been promulgated between the time the first one was drafted in 1825 and mid-1970."[6] These changes are the result of two fundamental features of national politics. First, constant government changes tended to discredit the existing consititution along with the deposed leader, thereby making it necessary for the new government to adopt a new basic charter.[7] Secondly, Honduran attitudes generally identify with the Latin American tradition of considering "the Constitution as a statement of ideals that may....need replacement, rather than as a permanent document intimately bound to everyday political practice."[8]

The current Constitution of 1982 divides the government into executive, legislative, and judicial powers. The president is designated as Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces and is elected by popular vote. This arrangement has remained intact throughout all constitutions. Moreover:

> Honduran constitutions have generally required that the President be elected by a simple majority of the popular vote, rather than by a mere plurality. This procedure has produced technical difficulties on numerous occasions, for oftentimes the candidate has not received the requisite majority. Theoretically, selection of the president is then made by congress but, in fact, the lack of a definite winner has generally been regarded as a cue for forceful takeover by one of the leading candidates.[9]

In fact, this method of election was to blame for several revolutions, the most serious of which was the bloody conflict of 1924.[10]

> The congress of 1924 was divided into three groups.... and refused to compromise. No President was elected, and the candidates then resorted to force in an attempt to win the presidency. If the congress had made a selection among the three candidates and had failed to select the one with the greatest number of votes, it is likely that the popular candidate's supporters would have resorted to force anyway.[11]

Despite the repeated changes of the basic charter, whereby the ideal government of the majority is typified, the average Honduran is not disconcerted by the difference between theory and practice.[12]

"They accept the idea of democratic government along with the belief that through economic development and social improvement the theory may gradually become practice."[13]

The political development of Honduras was, up to 1950, marked by constant changes in the head of the government and few countries in Latin America have been as politically disturbed and unstable as Honduras, "which during the 125 years up to 1950 saw the executive office change hands 115 times, under circumstances that made social and economic progress next to impossible."[14]

Honduras is a democratic-oriented nation and despite its political instability, it struggles for the regular continuance in office of its leaders. According to Blutstein,

> The principal causes of political instability have been the nation's poor economy, regional rivalries growing out of difficult geographic conditions and the divided colonial past, lack of a strong sense of nationalism until recent times, and frequent interference in domestic politics during the ninteenth century by neighboring countries.[15]

To illustrate the changes of the executive office, see Table XV (The Executive Office, Assumptions of Power) which covers 158 years from 1824 to 1982. Moreover, Table XVI (Analysis of Decrees, Passed from 1896 to 1936) reflects the strong centralization of government.

Starting in the twentieth century the foreign intervention decreased, the methods of communication improved, and some political consolidation took place. These factors have helped the central governments to carry out their endeavors and, more importantly, to complete their terms in office with greater regularity.

POLITICAL PARTIES

Political parties have existed in Honduras since the early 1890s when Celeo Arias organized the different factions of the Liberals into what now is the Liberal Party.[16] Other parties were formed subsequently. They will be discussed separately in a later section.

The Honduran Constitution of 1965 guarantees the right of legally registered political parties to function, provided they are not based on divisions of race, sex, or class.[17] Antidemocratic parties or those subordinate to "an international or foreign organization whose ideological programs threaten the sovereignty of the state" are prohibited.[18] This latter provision appears directed primarily at communist movements, which have never been a major political force in the country but which have provided a lively source of controversy since the mid 1950s.[19]

> Entities calling themselves political parties have played an important role in government since independence, but most of them were not parties in the true sense of the word. Instead, what existed during most of the ninteenth century were armed political bands loyal to a particular leader.[20]

Maximo Jerez provides a definition of terms which is fundamental to analyze the political party development in Honduras:

> If a political party is to be defined as a voluntary association, organized for the purpose of achieving control of the government through legal procedures, and to which individual members are subordinate, then political parties have existed in Honduras since only the 1890s. If to this definition is added the possession of an effective guiding philosophy, then political parties have never existed in Honduras.[21]

The two major political parties in Honduras are the National Party (PNH) and the Liberal Party (PLH), both rooted in the conservative/liberal division that absorbed Central America since the 1800s. Despite a history of bitter, often violent, partisan clashes, both parties can be characterized as moderate in ideology and, in principle, committed to the democratic process of political change.[22]

Two smaller parties are also represented in the Congress, the Innovation and Unity Party (PINU) and the Christian Democratic Party (PDCH), but they do not appear to play an important role in Honduran politics as the elections of April 1981 suggest that their traditional counterparts--the National and Liberal parties--will not soon be overtaken by the newer parties.[23]

Other political party activity includes that of the Communist party.

> When the Communists had the upper hand in Guatemala in 1954, they poured $850,000 into Honduras to finance a nation-wide general strike, directed mainly against the United Fruit Company, the Standard Fruit Company.... and the Rosario Mining Company - all American owned. The Communists also sent in trained agitators and organizers.[24]

The strike went on in 1954 and it appeared to have accomplished its objective which was the crippling of the Honduran economy.[25] The party was, then, known as Partido Democratico Revolucionario Hondureno, but its present name is the Communist Party of Honduras (PCH).

The program they proposed to the central government during the 1954 strike included, among others: (1) nationalization of forests, minerals, and all land; (2) liquidation of all large landholdings; (3) nationalization of all public services, to include electricity and other power; (4) revision of all concessions to both Hondurans and foreigners; and prohibition of new contracts to foreign countries.[26]

To this date, extremist doctrines and parties have posed virtually no threat to Honduras' traditional political system. No powerful ideological force has ever emerged on the right and, though communist movement exists, the outlawed Communist Party has never possessed significant power.[27]

PRESENT POLITICAL CONDITIONS

In April 1981, 70% of Honduras' eligible voters went to the polls in a remarkable display of confidence in the democratization process of the country. The Liberal Party accumulated approximately 50% of the 1.2 million votes cast, giving it the edge in presidential and legislative elections to be held in November 1981.[28] The Liberal Party leaders were enthusiastic about the political reform process. They claim that their party offers real hope to the poor and otherwise disaffected groups within Honduran society.[29] The Liberal Party, they claim, is broadly based and includes within it a wide variety of labor, student, and peasant groups, as well as elements of the middle class.[30]

> "The Liberal leaders argue....that Honduras has learned....the lesson of the Nicaraguan revolution which is that Somoza-style government cannot forever succeed. A reform process must be implemented before the dissatisfaction of the population makes peaceful change impossible....The Liberal Party has long championed economic justice....social security, a labor code, and a vigorous program of agrarian reforms. The Liberals view HOnduras as an example for the other countries of Central America, a nation seeking a peaceful exit from the social contradictions and politically-inspired violence endemic to their region."[31]

The nationalists, for their part, deny any desire to obstruct the democratization process, but they claim for themselves "the heritage of past social reform, asserting authorship of the same labor codes and social security

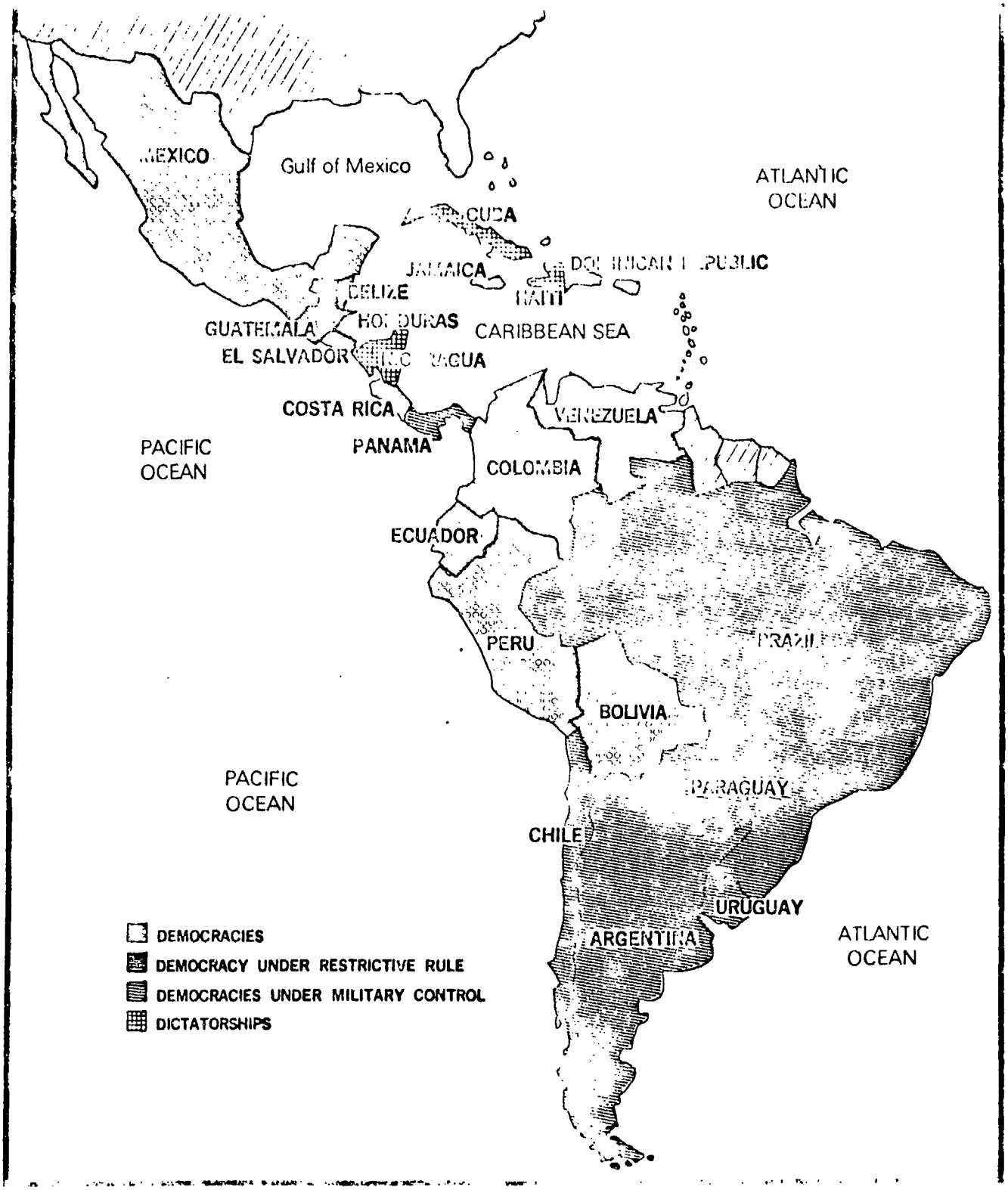
statutes....The Nationalists attributed the relative lack of violence in Honduras to two factors. Poverty is so universal in Honduras....that even the rich are poor, and resentment cannot be directed at the conspicuous display of wealth common in El Salvador and pre-revolutionary Nicaragua. Secondly, the church has never played a prominent role in Honduran society, thus sparing the country the revolutionary teachings and attitudes propounded, particularly by Jesuits, in other lands.[32]

Honduras is now under a new basic charter: The Constitution of 1982. This Constitution continues the country's tradition of a relatively strong executive, unicameral legislature, and judiciary appointed by the Congress. The executive is elected directly by popular vote. Congressional seats are assigned proportionally according to the number of votes the party received. Finally, the judiciary includes a Supreme Court of Justice, Court of Appeals, and several courts of original jurisdiction.[33]

After 13 years of almost continuous military governments, presidential elections were held in November 1981. These elections were won by the Liberal Doctor Roberto Suazo Cordoba, who was inaugurated as Constitutional President on January 27, 1982.

The new government is committed to improve the economic, social, and political conditions of the country; but its main efforts will be directed primarily to the poor state of the economy. Under Suazo's leadership, internal as well as external expenditures have been reduced, and his program of austerity within the internal budget will add substantially to his government's objectives.[34]

MAP 3 - LATIN AMERICAN GOVERNMENTS



MILITARISM IN HONDURAS: 1963 TO PRESENT

October 3, 1963 marked the end of the civilian government of Doctor Ramon Villeda Morales. Villeda's government was noted for its advances in labor legislation, an agrarian reform program, and the country's first social security law.[35] He proved to be both a reformer and a worthy politician who managed to stay in office for six years. However, only ten days before the presidential election was to take place, Colonel Oswaldo Lopez Arellano, Chief of the Armed Forces, successfully directed a military coup against the constitutional government.[36]

Lopez claimed that the Armed Forces had taken over the government to end the infiltration of communism and to maintain internal order;[37] but there were other reasons. First was to prevent the possible election of the Liberal candidate, Doctor Modesto Rodas Alverado, who in his campaign discourses had threatened the military establishment when he said that Honduras could survive without the military as Costa Rica was doing and that the trees of Honduras would be insufficient to hang all the military.[38] Second, Villeda Morales had created an armed force, the Civil Guard, independent of the military and very repressive. Therefore, the military considered the guard to be a threat and Lopez believed the guard would be used by the Liberal Party

to rig the elections.[39]

The first year of the Lopez regime was characterized by the use of authoritarian measures; he dissolved the Congress and the Civil Guard, proclaimed himself Chief of State until another constitutional government could be established and he exercised absolute power along with the Superior Defense Council. Lopez consistently demonstrated his fear for the formation of labor unions in Honduras. He believed unionization was communist-inspired. Therefore, his military regime used violent measures to retard the growth of unionism. Toward the end of his government, however,

> Lopez began to be characterized by the reform-minded regime of General Juan Velasco in Peru. ...In the Honduran Army there was a faction of officers who were receptive to....such ideas by introducing agrarian reform policies, even though the powerful land-owning aristocracy opposed them.[40]

In the first months of 1974 he fully committed the country's efforts to a fifteen-year national development plan in which agricultural communities would be established to eliminate both latifundia and minifundia and to increase productivity on a more egalitarian basis. Furthermore, his government supported the formation of labor unions; established a minimum wage; nationalized the foreign-owned lumber industries; terminated further concessions to foreign mining industries; and provided incentives for investment in new industries.[41] Lopez' term in office is regarded as successful and his in-

itiatives in internal policy formulation have eliminated some potential causes of internal disorders. He was taken out of office in April 1975 as a result of his alleged involvement in accepting a bribe of $2.5 million from the United Fruit Company, a US multinational firm, now United Brands.

The government then passed to the hands of General Juan Alberto Melgar who was directly appointed by the 30-member Superior Defense Council. His government continued what Lopez had begun; although a shift in emphasis toward more pragmatic and less populist programs was noted.

On August 7, 1978, Melgar was ousted by a military junta headed by General Policarpo Paz Garcia. On April 1, 1981 the Constituent Assembly left Garcia alone as President and later he would turn over the government to whoever was elected during national elections in November 1981.

It is worthwhile noting that in most Latin American countries, the rule for military governments has been to appoint military colleagues to top administrative posts and other key positions; but Honduras has been the exception to this rule because the last three military governments from 1963 have appointed their cabinets, administrative posts, and key positions from the civilian community.

After over 150 years of independence, Honduran lawmakers are still seeking the elusive formula that will permit the nation to have an Armed Force whose actions can be regulated so as to prevent the man in uniform from running

for public office, particularly at the national level.

The current Honduran constitution gives the Armed Forces freedom of action and places them under the direct control of the Chief of the Armed Forces, who is appointed by the Congress from a list of three officers proposed by the Superior Council of National Defense, and who remain in office for six years. Moreover, he may only be removed from office by the National Congress when he has been impeached and found guilty by two-thirds of its members, or in such cases as may be provided for in the constituent law of the Armed Forces. Thus, the Armed Forces are, for all intents and purposes, free of any control by the executive. Given their freedom from restraint, the oath required of the Armed Forces, by an Article of the Constitution,[42] becomes less than totally compelling. That article reads:

> In my name and in the name of the Armed Forces of Honduras, I solemnly swear that we will not be instruments of oppression; that even if they come from superiors in rank we will not carry out orders that violate the letter or spirit of the constitution; that we will defend the National Sovereignty and integrity of our land; that we will respect the rights and liberties of the people; that we will maintain the apolitical and professional dignity of the Armed Forces; and that we will defend the suffrage of the citizens and the Alternation of the exercise of the President of the republic.[43]

In early 1982, the military rule came to an end

when it passed the government to Doctor Roberto Suazo Cordova, a medical doctor who enjoys a great deal of popularity and acceptance among the majority of the population. His government is fully committed to reactivate the land reform program, to improve the living and economic conditions of the Hondurans and to implement other health and educational advances. However, his efforts may be hampered by those pressures now being felt from Nicaragua, Cuba, El Salvador, and Guatemala in that order. Consequently, he will have to deal with a more complex regional political and economic situation which may cause stresses in the internal political and economic areas.

NOTES

[1]Romulo E. Duron, Bosequejo Historico de Honduras, 1502 a 1921 (San Pedro Sula), p.6

[2]William S. Stokes, Honduras: An Area Study in Government, (New York, New York: Profile Press, 1950), p. 30

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[6]Howard I. Blutstein, et al, Area Handbook for Honduras, (Washington, D.C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1971), p. 94

[7]Blutstein, Area Handbook, p. 94

[8]op. cit., p. 94

[9]Ibid., p. 99

[10]Stokes, Honduras, p. 104

[11]op. cit., p. 104

[12]Ibid., p. 105

[13]Ibid., p. 105

[14]Johnson, The Military, p. 5

[15]Blutstein, Area Handbook, p. 5

[16]Luis Mejia Moreno, El Calvario de un Pueblo, (Tegucigalpa, 1937), p. 23

[17]Harvey K. Meyer, Historical Dictionary of Honduras, (Metuchen, N.J.: The Scarecrow Press, Inc. 1976), p. 280

[18]Blutstein, Area Handbook, p. 108

[19]op. cit., p. 108

[20]Ibid., p. 109

[21]Maximo Jerez et al., Una sola Patria y on Solo Gobierno, (Tegucigalpa: Revista de la Universidad, February 15, 1912), p. 95

[22]Background Notes, Honduras, (Washington, D.C.: United States Department of State, May 1982), p. 3

[23]Background Notes, Honduras, p. 3

[24]Jules Dubois, Operation America: The Communist Conspiracy in Latin America, (New York: Walker and Company, 1963), p. 239

[25]Meyer, Historical Dictionary, p. 88

[26]Dubois, Operation America, p. 240

[27]Blutstein, Area Handbook, p. 110

[28]Central America, Report to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, (Washington, D.C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1981), p. 18

[29]op. cit., p. 18

[30]Diario la Prensa, (San Pedro Sula, Honduras, June 26, 1981), p. 5

[31]Central America, Report, p. 19

[32]Central America, Report, p. 19

[33]Background NOtes, Honduras, p. 3

[34]Annual Supplement 1982, Quarterly Economic Review of Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Published by the Economic Intelligence Unit, London. England, 1982, p. 27

[35]Don L. Etchison, The United States and Militarism in Central America, (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1975), p. 20

[36]The author witnessed and participated in this coup while he was in his second year of the military school of Honduras.

[37]Etchison, op. cit., p. 20

[38]Modesto Rodas, very often announced this to attract votes from the recently created labor and peasant unions which Lopez suspected were infiltrated by International Communists and whose vote would be decisive to win the election.

[39]Etchison, op. cit., p. 21

[40]Ibid., p. 25

[41]Ibid., p. 26

[42]John J. Johnson, The military and Society in Latin America, (California: Stanford University Press, 1974), p. 113

[43]Johnson, op. cit., p. 113

CHAPTER FOUR

SURVEY OF INTERNAL CONDITIONS IN NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES

INTRODUCTION

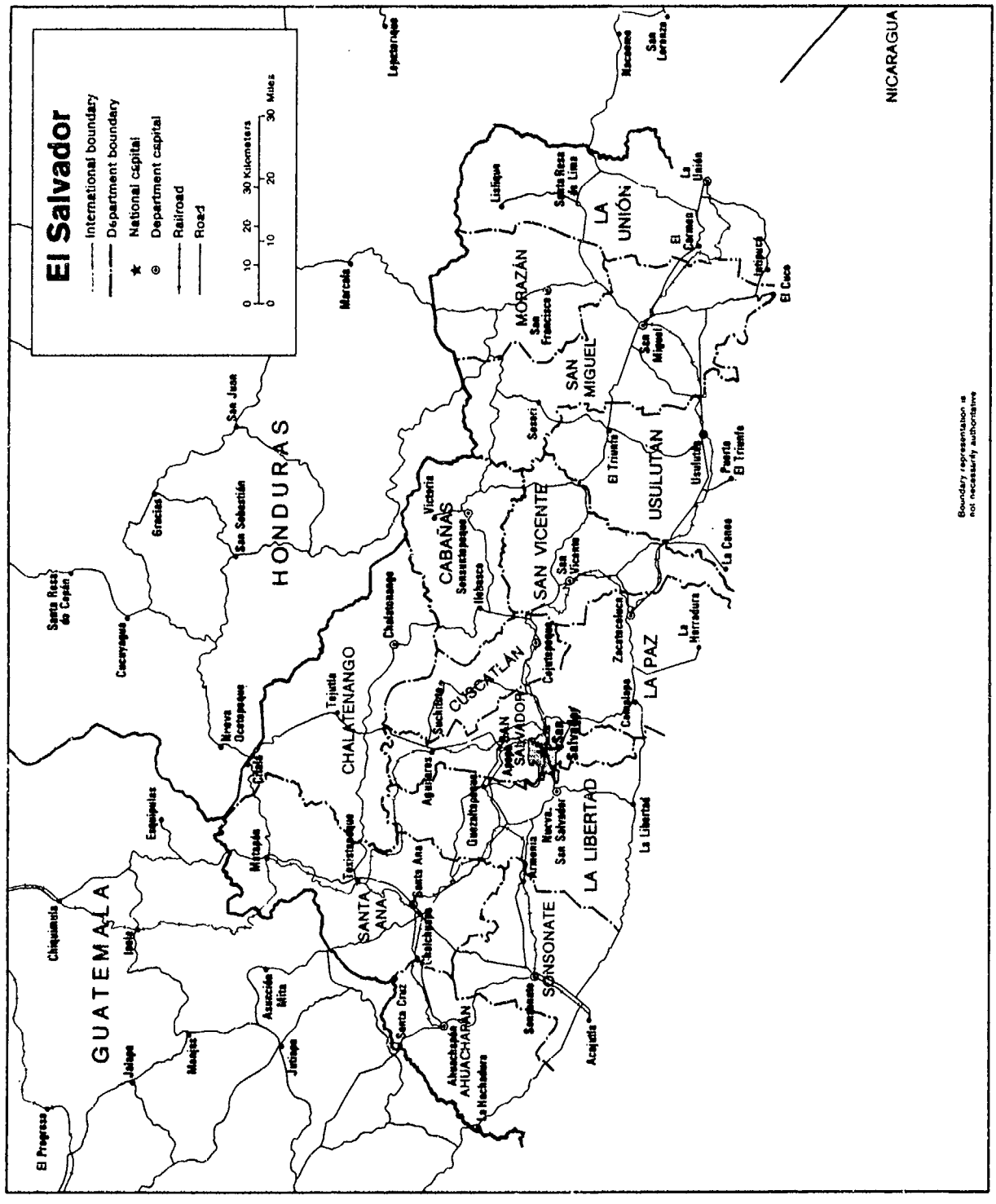
The five nations that comprise Central America: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua have frequently shared similar problems within their respective national structures, and one finds it hard to separate them in a clear-cut fashion, economically, socially, and intellectually, when politically they are so intertwined. Usually the history of one is in part the history of the others. Furthermore, their common background of Spanish heritage which dominated the area for nearly four centuries; their varied but similar relations with the rest of the world have given them, to a great extent, common national objectives and similar international experiences.

This chapter will address those socio-economic and political factors which characterize each nation, with the exception of Costa Rica. The latter has been left out of the account on the grounds that it does not have a regular Army; it only shares a border with Nicaragua, and its internal political situation is, by Central American standards, the most stable on the isthmus; while Nicaragua, El Salvador,

and Guatemala are in constant uprest and represent for Honduras a potential external threat from either open aggression or the support of subversive elements within Honduras. Although it is not possible to analyze each country in detail, the research will concentrate on the major problems of each country that have set the stage for internal subversion.

Finally, the Soviet-Cuban strategies in Latin America will be looked at as an external factor which may contribute to the exploitation of the already existing ills in Central America.

MAP 4 - EL SALVADOR



EL SALVADOR

Sharing borders with Honduras and Guatemala, El Salvador is the only country on the isthmus lacking a Caribbean coast. It is the smallest and most densely populated nation in Central America, crowding 4.35 million inhabitants into its 8,259 square miles.[1]

Since 1931, El Salvador has been ruled to varying degrees by military leaders. There have been a few brief governments of pacific and civilian orientation, but the Army has been the most influential group in political affairs.[2]

> In this century, the Army and the leading "fourteen families" have dominated political affairs. But since World War II, this domination has met with increased resistance.[3]

Traditionally, El Salvador has been controlled by a group called "The Fourteen Families", which form the oligarchy and the economic elite of the country. Their association with the military has been rather symbiotic. Both the military and economic elite "are mutually dependent, and each supports the other...."[4] The cooperation they lend to each other is a determined factor in national politics since the economic elite sees in the Army a partner which contributes to ward off radical incursions or revolts in the country;[5] whereas the Army sees in the economic elite a springboard to obtain economic status, education, and most importantly, access to power.

This power sharing is what has characterized El Salvador's politics since the early 1930s. Furthermore, the Fourteen Families own most of the best agricultural land,[6] in which they grow coffee; the most important export of El Salvador.

The great majority of Salvadorans live in the rural areas where they are small scale landowners who often could not earn a living from their land and were forced to work as laborers for the large landholder who would provide them with only the basics: housing and food.[7] "Such rural conditions have been one of the stimulants of migration into the cities," and into neighboring countries as well. Honduras alone had absorbed some 300,000 Salvadorans before the Five Days War between the two countries in July 1969, or 12.5% of the Honduran population. This war caused the majority of Salvadorans to migrate back to their country, thus representing a great burden on El Salvador's economy.

A socio/economic elite formed by the "Fourteen Families" and supported by the Army, poor agrarian reform projects, and latifundia have been the most important factors which have in turn created strong feelings of hostility towards the wealthy class in El Salvador. Consequently "peasant unrest has existed in El Salvador since the creation of large latifundia".[8]

The most violent movement in the early 1930s was the uprising of 60,000 peasants against the prevailing system.

Leftist political groups claimed that there were 30,000 people killed, but the government claims only half of that. Many years after this massacre, the rural areas were still under strict control by the Army[9] thus identifying it as a repressive instrument of the ruling class in the eyes of the people. Moreover, the formation of any type of peasant association was legally prohibited.[10] Interestingly enough,

> it seems that the fear of the traditional elite for any form of change is one of the tension-creating factors. While the massacre of 1932 brought about a considerable awareness of their basic interests.... There was at times more talk about the possibility of land reforms by those who feared this than by the peasantry, but the fact that the elite was constantly armed and on watch for any more indications of the peasant's activism and was willing to block or repress it violently, contributed to the highly explosive social climate.[11]

There is almost no rural middle class in El Salvador, and the gap between the rich and the poor is highly marked. Of all social and economic reforms, almost none has been successful due to elite resistence. The pressure of rapidly expanding masses of rural and urban poor has caused the governments to react violently to their demands,[12] and the interests of the small elite have represented a serious obstacle to progress which in turn has served to attract the attention of the more radical movements from abroad who are ready to exploit the internal weaknesses of the country.

On October 15, 1979, military officers ousted President Carlos Humberto Romero and called upon civilian leaders to join and undertake a peaceful and democratic revolution.[13] This Revolutionary Junta of Government (RJG) included three civilians (two Christian democrats and one independent) and one military officer. This bloodless coup caught by surprise both the left and the right. The former accused the civilian-military junta of being under influence of the United States and of the far right, whereas the latter attempted to block the reform measures taken by the government and also attempted to overthrow it.[14]

In January 1980 the junta dissolved because it could neither implement reforms nor deal with the increasing violence. The officers responsible for the October 15 movement continued, along with the Christian Democrats, in an interim coalition until a new government could be elected by the people.

In March 1980 a series of economic reforms were announced, to include: 1) Agrarian reform which expropriated all latifundios larger than 1,250 acres, and set the stage for granting 90% of all arable lands to cooperatives or sharecroppers; 2) Nationalization of banks; 3) Nationalization of primary export products.[15] These actions caused the small economic elite to protest against the regime; they were not willing to allow some concessions, thereby putting the

government in a difficult situation where it was unable to deal with either the right or the left.

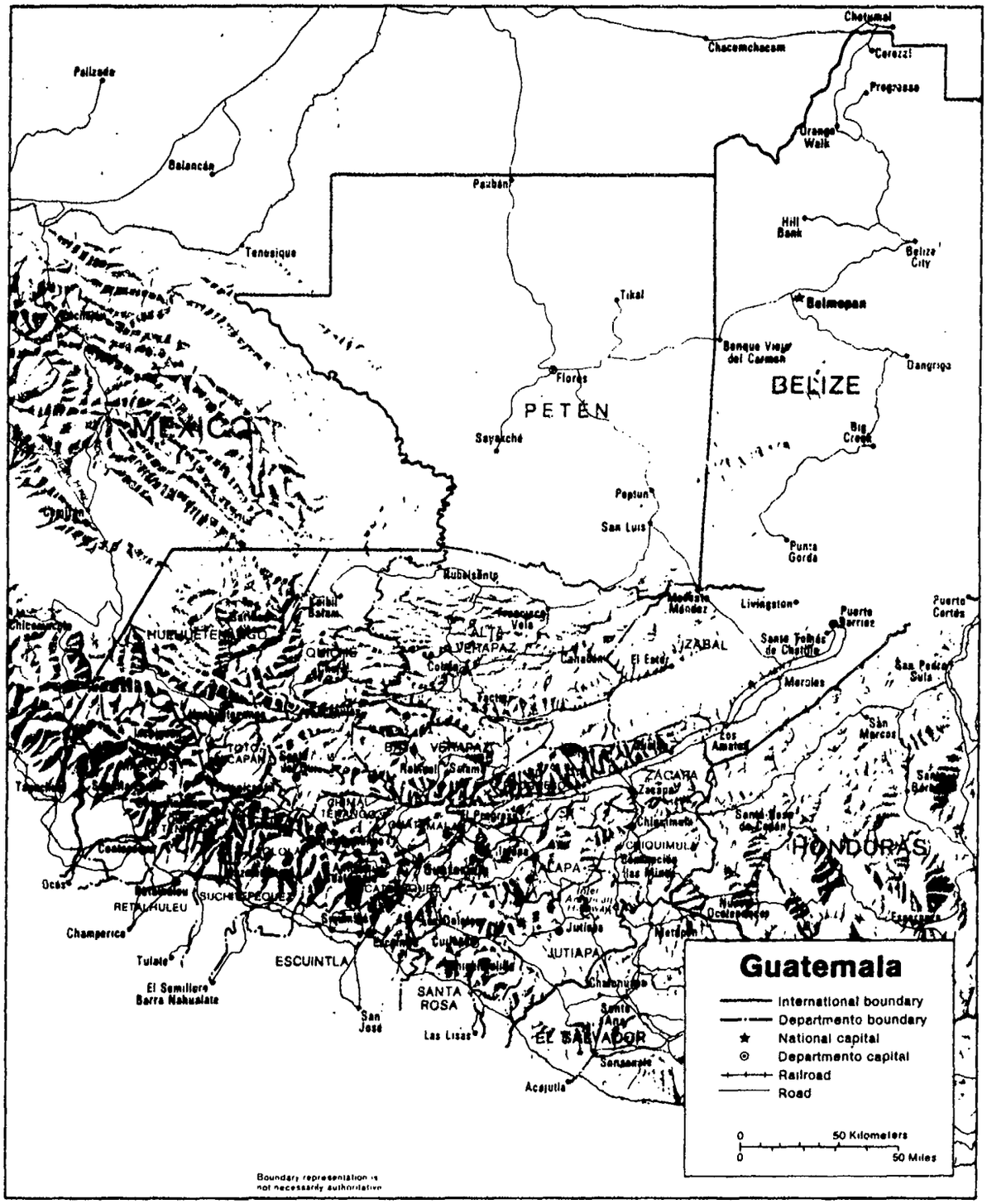
In May 1980 the leftist opposition to the government formed the Unified Revolutionary Directorate (DRU) which in its manifesto "is dedicated to the establishment of a Marxist, totalitarian government in El Salvador".[16] In an effort to end the escalating violence between the left wing guerillas and the government, elections for a congress were held in March 1982.[17] As a result, President Jose Napoleon Duarte was replaced by Mr. Alvaro Magaña, a conservative banker with no background in politics. He was proposed by Defense Minister Colonel Guillermo Garcia and former junta member Colonel Jaime Gutierrez.[18] The new government has suspended some portions of the land reform program which has produced adverse reactions because it will leave landless a number in excess of 30,000 tenant farmers who had applied for land under the program. The landowners, on the other hand, are content with the measure, claiming that they now have an incentive to cultivate land which was previously left idle.[19]

Despite the failure of their boycott of the March 1982 elections, the guerillas of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) have by no means ceased their activities and the civil war continues unabated. The new president of

El Salvador, Mr. Alvaro Magaña, has ruled out negotiations with the FMLN and their political wing, the Democratic Revolutionary Front (FDR).[20]

Finally, the last three years have witnessed a dramatic collapse in the country's economy due to a deliberate campaign of sabotage directed by the guerillas against the economic infrastructure of the country. "The new government sees its primary economic task as that of reviving confidence".[21] The outcome of El Salvador's civil war is hard to assess at this time. The Salvadorans themselves must face and resolve their problems concerning socio-economic inequalities. The external threat of Communish, however, requires that El Salvador's neighbors (Honduras and Guatemala) closely cooperate to prevent its spread throughout the area. The conflict has a great impact on neighboring Honduras. The thousands of refugees that flow into its territory represent a burden to the weak economy of the country. Among these refugees are many guerilla sympathizers who are willing and anxious to instigate insurgencies in Honduras and who represent a threat to the internal stability of the nation.

MAP 5 - GUATEMALA



GUATEMALA

The most populous country in Central America, with 7.62 million inhabitants, Guatemala shares borders with Mexico to the northwest, Honduras and Belize to the east, and El Salvador to the southeast. Its extreme diversity of climate and landforms is matched by great cultural, linguistic, and economic differences within its population.[22]

More than half of Guatemala (53%) are of pure Mayan Indian descent who continue to live in remote mountain villages, persisting in a way of life that has changed little over the centuries. "The Indians...are a passive and politically inert group who wish to follow their age-old customs with a minimum of interference."[23] But continuous pressures of increasing population and the influences of modern life have forced the Indians out of their traditional groups. Mingled with the politically conscious middle class Ladino (a mixture of Spanish-Indian), the Indians represent a great majority who struggle for land reforms and socio-economic changes.[24] One of their basic problems is the language because they are monolingual, speaking only their own dialect. This makes the government's attempts to integrate them with the rest of society difficult.

Jorge Ubico, who took control of Guatemala in 1931, is the one who "began paving the way for Communist subversion, creating circumstances under which Communism was first to as-

sert itself.[25] The power structure in this period was unitary and the lines of power were direct from any member of society to a middle man who in turn was responsible to Ubico.[26] In general:

> While Ubico succeeded in keeping the military well within control, in eliminating the contrary intellectuals from the country, and in subtly subverting the monopoly of control over the peasants by the local upper class, he neither wanted nor attempted to destroy the general social control exercised locally by the upper class over the peasants...[27]

The peasants who were largely mestizos took the majority of available jobs, therefore leaving the Indians in a disadvantageous position. The revolution that ousted Ubico marked the transition from dictatorial rule to something that swung the pendulum toward the extreme left.[28]

Dr Juan Jose Arevalo followed Ubico in 1945 and it was under his presidency that the communists first gained a foothold in Guatemala.[29] "During his presidency the communists burrowed into the vitals of Guatemalan life. He was aware of their presence and made only half-hearted efforts to uproot them".[30]

In March 1951, Colonel Jacobo Arbenz took the oath of office. At that time Arbenz had at his disposal the means to destroy the communist threat, but instead he pursued the same course as Arevalo, going even further in aiding the conspirators in a vain attempt to socialize the country. Under the Arbenz leadership and administration, communism

increased its grip on different phases of public life, to include the courts, legislature, propoganda media, and the Agrarian reform.[31]

In 1954, Jacobo Arbenz was overthrown by Colonel Carlos Castillo Armas. During Castillo's term in office the voting rights of the Indians were cancelled, expropriated lands were returned to former owners, the constitution of 1945 was abolished and replaced by a new one in 1956, and only a few measures passed under both Arevalo and Arbenz, were retained.[32]

> By mid-1957 Guatemala showed favorable economic signs for the first time...unemployment was on the decline, investments had increased...roads and buildings were dotting the countryside, and foreign technicians were working for the improvement of agricultural techniques... Longtime observers of Guatemala could not remember better prosperity.[33]

Castillo's government ended violently on the night of July 27, 1957, when one of the presidential guards shot the president at a point blank range.

The above accounts are important to understand the present developments in Guatemala. The guerillas started in the early 1960s and their activities, if neutralized by the governments, have never been completely destroyed. The plans of the guerillas include creating loyal units in the countryside while increasingly operating within the urban areas where the counterinsurgency devices are less effective.

As a result, the urban area of Guatemala City has always been part of the guerilla strategy as a source of financing, through kidnapping and bank robberies; personnel recruiting from the radical student groups and some upper sectors; and development of anticipated popular support.[34]

> The fact that the guerilleros exist and have been able to persist since their formulation in the early 1960s is suggestive of the depth of the cleavage that separates Guatemalan society. It is a consequence, in part, of the division that exists at the higher levels and that finds the confrontation at lower levels essential to its success...[35]

It was estimated, up to 1962, that there was in Guatemala a hard core of about 200 dedicated Communists with a possible nucleus of some 600 additional members who could be formed into a party if the opportunity existed.[36]

> A skeleton organization for seizing power and ruling the area exists, ready to be dusted off when desired. And while communism is more of a potential than an immediate peril in Guatemala, it is contended...that the support given to Guatemalan Communists by the Soviet Embassy in Mexico City and by the Cuban Communists makes the communist peril to Guatemala ever present, and foolhardy in the extreme to ignore.[37]

Presently, Guatemala is ruled by General Efrain Rios Montt, a former presidential candidate for the Christian Democratic Party, and a retired Army officer who was brought to power by a bloodless military coup in March 1982; di-

rected by Army officers who called upon him to take charge of a short-lived military junta. He was then left to rule alone when he dissolved the junta. "The new government is anxious to portray an image to the rest of the world which is more favorable than its predecessors."[38] Moreover, there has been some reduction in the scale of violence in the war between the guerillas and the government. However, no date has as yet been set for new elections.[39]

MAP 6 - NICARAGUA

NICARAGUA

Nicaragua is the largest country in Central America and also the least densely populated. It is encircled by Honduras in the north, Costa Rica in the south and both the Atlantic and Pacific oceans to the east and west respectively. The history of Nicaragua is even more turbulent than that of her neighbors given the long heritage of violence that prevailed during the Colonial period. Starting in the early 1900s and

> During the US occupation of Nicaragua from 1912 to 1933, the Marines equipped and trained the Nicaraguan Guardia Nacional (National Guard) to act as the country's police force. The Marines did such a good job.... that by 1936 it had become the most powerful political force in the nation....[40]

Little did the Americans realize that they were creating such an instrument of power that it would serve to oppress the Nicaraguan people, act as a personal tool for the Somoza family and be the main support of the longest-lived dictatorship the Western hemisphere has known. The peculiarity of this rule was its dynastic character in which three members of the same family ruled Nicaragua from 1937 to 1979, a total of 42 years.

The Somozas practically controlled the entire activities of the country and administered it as if it were their personal property. No transaction or commercial activity,

signing of contracts or exports could be executed without the approval of the Somaza family.[41]

> Wherever Nicaraguans looked, they found the General. He was their partner or their competitor in business, frequently both.... It went even further. Somoza's Nicaragua was run like an occupied country.... The Army was always present. It mixed aggressively into people's lives.[42]

The officers and soldiers of the guard had more rights than the civilians. For example, officers were given priority to obtain public services such as utilities, telephone, and even mail. They did not pay taxes and could import luxuries from abroad without paying import duties.[43]

Somoza's formula for staying in power was rather simple. First, he isolated his national guard from the population by allowing both officers and soldiers to corrupt themselves; to go into illegal businesses such as gambling, prostitution, racketeering, etc..[44] Secondly, Somoza cultivated the Americans very carefully: He offered to send troops to Korea, he allowed American forces to be trained in Nicaragua, and the enemies of the United States were also the enemies of Nicaragua. Thirdly, he would co-opt his contenders by buying them off or by discouraging them from opposing him.[45]

This general formula characterized Somoza's dynasty throughout its 42 years of repression. Somoza's misuse of power was also responsible for an accumulation of vast personal wealth at the expense of his country.

> Anastasio Somoza Garcia died the richest and most powerful man in the country. He became wealthy by sapping the lifeblood of his people. He became powerful by stripping them of their freedom. With that wealth and with that power, Anastasio Somoza Garcia founded a dynasty so strong and personal...[46]

During most of their rule, the Somozas commanded the total submission of the Nicaraguans; but there always existed a persistent subversive movement. This was the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN).

> Organized in 1963, the FSLN adopted the name of the world famous anti-Yankee Nicaraguan guerilla of the early 1930s, General Cesar Augusto Sandino. Historically, the FSLN has been Castro-oriented...[47]

This group constantly pressured the Somoza regime until it caused the fall of the dynasty. The actual disintegration and collapse of the Somoza system began in the early 1970s under Anastasio Somoza Debayle.[48]

> During this period, Nicaraguans of all classes became increasingly alienated by the intemperate dictator's greed and brutality.... Two major events accelerated the process of popular disaffection..., the earthquake of 1972...In the wake of the disaster, Somoza and his accomplices used their control of the government to funnel international funds into their own pockets... and the catalyst which triggered the war of liberation was the murder...of La Prensa editor Pedro Joaquin Chamorro.[49]

Finally, on July 19, 1979, "one of the most sanguinary dictatorships in Latin America was demolished by a

popular revolutionary insurrection".[50]

The people of Nicaragua had long been awaiting a change from oppressive dictatorship to some political system of a milder nature. The Sandinista movement offered that alternative and the people had great hopes for the performance of the new government. Little did they expect, however, that the Sandinistas were merely a continuation of Somoza's ruthless rule. The revolution of Nicaragua now represents a threat to the neighboring countries, especially Honduras, for it is not only concerned with Nicaragua's internal problems, but the Sandinistas also attempt to interfere in the internal affairs of their neighbors by encouraging subversive movements there.

The revolution of Nicaragua was viewed with sympathy by the Hondurans and it was considered basically good for the citizens of Nicaragua, but the exportation of revolution to its neighbors is repudiated and condemned by the two democratic governments that share borders with Nicaragua: Costa Rica and Honduras.

SOVIET-CUBAN STRATEGIES IN LATIN AMERICA

The Soviet interest in Latin America is of relatively recent origin. It can be traced back to the early 1960s with the triumph of the Cuban revolution. Prior to that time the Soviet Union certainly desired to expand its influence to Latin America, but the possibility of a serious confrontation with Washington held them in check. "Moscow had long viewed Latin America as a Yankee security zone,"[51] and Soviet strategies regarded it as a low priority region.

Presently, however, things have changed markedly as the Soviets seem to be regaining interest in the area. This is demonstrated not only in speeches...

> but in mounting Soviet political, economic, and cultural activities in the region. Particular stress in Soviet discussions is placed on the deterioration of US-Latin American ties and on the ferment in social and political relationships within the region. It is evident that Moscow perceives a possibility that these developments can significantly affect the East-West balance of forces in favor of the Soviet Union.[52]

A piece of evidence to support the above is the fact that the Soviets have gained considerable confidence in their ability to project power and influence far beyond the natural borders of the Soviet Union.[53] One example which illustrates this confidence is that Cuba has demonstrated that although distant from the Soviet Union it can carry out missions on its behalf designed to support popular revolutions

in the Western hemisphere,[54] particularly in the less developed countries.

If Cuba does not export revolution to the other Latin American nations, particularly Central America, it certainly supports them; in some cases openly, as is demonstrated in Nicaragua's recent revolution, in the subversion in El Salvador, and in some other countries in a more subtle fashion, under the facade of educational programs. Cuba operates an indoctrination program on its "Isle of Youth", 30 miles off its southwest coast, which trains children from countries where Cuba has established influence. From 1977 until the end of 1981, Cuba trained 26,000 children from several countries including Nicaragua, Ethiopia, Zaire, Angola, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau, and Southwest Africa. The program mixes schooling in mathematics and applied sciences; but the great emphasis is put on Marxist-Leninist philosophy with a daily regimen of farm labor. Cuba denies charges that children are receiving military or guerilla training.[55] But this denial is difficult to accept.

Cuba plays an important role for the Soviet Union, in the Western hemisphere, by supporting terrorism, insurgencies, and national liberation movements throughout the Americas. In some Latin American countries violent conflict has arisen from a wide variety of causes such as historical, social, and economic inequities which have generated frustration and disappointment among the populations. Furthermore, economic

crises have strained the political and economic institutions of regional nations. These factors make these states vulnerable to Cuban opportunism.[56] Clearly,

> Cuba's readiness to foment violence to exploit such situations imposes serious obstacles to economic progress, democratic developments and self-determination.[57]

While Cuba is the active agent in subversion in the region, the Soviet Union is extending its influence into areas of Latin America which used to be exclusively reserved for the United States of America and some European countries. For example, "Soviet trade with Latin America...grew tenfold between 1970-1977."[58] The Soviets have also increased their investment credits to the region; their most spectacular investment be-in constituted by "the Almos hydroelectric dam-irrigation project in Peru." They have an oil supply agreement with Venezuela whereby the Soviets supply Venezuelan customers in Western Europe while Venezuela reciprocates by supplying oil to Cuba in the Western hemisphere. A similar agreement is on the way with Mexico.[59] Moreover, "the Soviets are assisting Mexico in nuclear reactor technology...and have offered to supply Argentina and Brazil with enriched uranium."[60]

This only illustrates a few of the agreements the Soviets have signed with some Latin American nations, but more importantly, the Soviets are assuring themselves with

the fact that the economies of some Latin American countries will, in the long run, depend on Soviet technology. In addition, they will be able to gain and exercise both political and economic leverage in the region.

Latin America, and more specifically Central America's desperate need for economic development, force some nations to look for the benefits of diversified economic relations with the Eastern European bloc.

Therefore, Soviet national interests in Latin America appear to be defined primarily in terms of economic and political power; but the Marxist-Leninist ideology will, of course, condition the Soviet conception of power.[61]

Both the Soviet Union and the US possess similar instruments with which to implement their policies in Latin America. Among these instruments, the most used are economic aid, commercial trade, diplomatic relations, cultural exchanges, technology transfers, joint ventures, etc..[62] But "the Soviet Union enjoys a special instrument of power...that is not available to the United States..., a client state whose domestic policies in many cases parallel the objectives of other modernizing political groups...."[63] Cuba, which serves the Soviet Union as a "showcase of Communism", represents the ideal pragmatic and ideological

state from where Marxism-Leninism is exported to other nations of the area.[64]

Another area that the Soviets carefully exploit in Latin America is that of the propoganda machine. In this relationship, one of the greatest disadvantages of the US has, when confronting the USSR in the cold war, is its inability to emulate the Soviet propogandists. The latter are constantly communicating their doctrine and ideology to the Latin Americans through their gigantic propoganda machine, which is operated at the grassroots level by local communist nationals in the great majority of the republics.[65]

The United States, on the other hand, still relies on its ability to project immediate power in the area given its proximity. The US ability to provide corrective rather than preventive measures has proven to be catastrophic. For example, Nicaragua, a longtime ally of the US, may very well be added to the list of Soviet satellites.

When we analyze both the interests of the Soviet Union and Cuba in Central America, a careful dichotomy must be made between the two. On one hand;

> The focus of Soviet interests and the main thrust of its purpose and activities with respect to the revolutionary movement in Latin America at the present stage is not so much an extension of Soviet control or the attainment of outright communist regimes, but the buildup of opposition and hostility toward the US and toward those elements in Latin American societies which have ties with the US or favor following a traditional democratic course. Thus, the emergence of Latin America as a target for Soviet penetration testifies not only to Soviet opportunism in exploiting favorable developments in that as well as other Third World regions and to growing Soviet capability to involve itself in distant areas, but also to the importance which Moscow attaches to Latin America in the East-West balance of power.[66]

At the other end of the spectrum is Cuba which, according to Thomas O. Enders, Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, is a Soviet surrogate. But it is not simply a Soviet surrogate. Its support for subversion derives from its own deeply based ideological conviction, which is a fundamental tenet of the Cuban revolution. Further, Fidel Castro boasts that Cuba liberated itself from the ties of the US and its revolution constitutes an example which should be imitated by other Latin American countries.[67]

Cuba's strategies for exporting revolutions have changed a great deal since the times of "Che" Guevara.

Now the system is more sophisticated and it no longer centers its efforts on "armed focos, but combines support for revolutionary groups with propaganda, youth training courses, scholarships, and bilateral economic/technical assistance.[68] These efforts are carried out, of course, with the approval and financial support of the Soviets. Cuba receives three billion dollars a year from the Soviet Union, or a quarter of Cuba's GNP. This help allows Castro to maintain the second largest and best equipped military force in Latin America.[69] Furthermore, it enables him to project power to Central America in a matter of hours.

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CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS

The five nations that comprise Central America: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua, have currently taken on a new importance in international affairs. The region sits across one of the world's most important communication and transportation crossroads; military, political, and economic issues are focusing attention on the region's national fragmentation, military vulnerability, political instability, and archaic institutions, but most important of all, the region's susceptibility to ideological infiltration from abroad is readily apparent.

It would be an exhaustive and time consuming process to try to analyze each country separately. Therefore, this chapter will concentrate primarily on Honduras and its potential for revolution given its current internal conditions, along with the characteristics of revolutionary movements. However, it should be noted that this does not imply that Honduras and its immediate neighbors should disregard the influence that revolutionary movements receive from abroad, because "one of the critical variables in the success of revolutionary movements is the extent to which that movement receives external support from foreign states and sympathizers".[1]

With respect to external influences in the Central

American region, Thorsten V. Kalijarvi, former United States ambassador to El Salvador, remarked:

> Castro has not only awakened the Western Hemisphere to the strategic importance of Central America, but has made clear how easy it would be to conquer the area with a small, modern military expedition. Just as a handful of Spanish conquistadores vanquished the thousands of Indians who peopled the area..., so today the new conquistadores seek to conquer the area. Just as the illiterate Indian, knowing neither King nor Christ, was enslaved, so the illiterate masses, knowing little of the Soviets or Castro, would be conquered. Just as Cortez and his lieutenants burned the nobles, leaders, and priests alive, leaving only the common people, so today the communists would use the firing squad to liquidate the upper class, the leaders, and the clergy, leaving only the amorphous masses on whom to impose their will.[2]

External support to a revolutionary movement is very likely to succeed in the particular case of guerilla warfare, "where the level of ideological conflict is high and where the rebels plainly state their revolutionary ambitions".[3]

This analysis will examine areas related to the conditions, causes, and circumstances that appear to be most frequently associated with the development of revolutions. Thomas H. Greene, whose study in comparative revolutionary movements is most valuable in this research, warns the student of revolutions on the fact that;

> According to the formalities of scientific method, we can never really prove causality. At best, we demonstrate varying degrees of probability in the relationship of specific phenomena. And the persuasiveness of our causal inference is more a matter of logical self-evidence than empirical certainty. In short, causality is an invention of the mind.[4]

The analysis, then, will take into account this fact.

ACCELERATORS OF REVOLUTION

These factors are called precipitants by some authors while others call them underlying reasons; but, for the sake of continuity, I will go along with Greene's accelerators, which he defines as

> The final,or immediate causes of revolution... they are discrete events and occur at a specific point in time. Their principal function is to cohere individuals with shared values into a group with revolutionary potential.[5]

Among the many accelerators of revolution, that may be cited, I shall be concerned, for the particular case of

Honduras, first, with the economic conditions of the country as historically they have played an important role in the formation of revolutions in other countries, and second, with the government violence as this has also been decisive in creating revolts.

ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

Honduras is an agricultural based economy and its present government has understood that economic growth can not be achieved without a sound agricultural development program which, in turn, is a fundamental step in the advancement towards a pre-industrial society. Agriculture provides a living to the majority of Hondurans and plays a dominant role in the balance of payments and in generating government revenues to pay the cost of social services essential to improving the quality of life. Thus, the main development problems facing the government of Suazo Cordova are how to make the agricultural sector more productive and how to get rural incomes above the poverty line. Analysis and experience show that the small landholder can improve his productivity enough to move above the poverty line if he has (1) secure land tenure and access to technological advice and credits, (2) if he can get his crops to market economically,(3) if he can secure enough capital to shift to high value crops, and (4) if he can find off-farm employment during his non-peak work periods.[6]

To illustrate on how the economic conditions of a country may affect its political stability and can bring about changes, in this case a coup d'etat, Greene observes:

> In Ghana on 13 January 1972, a military coup d'etat overturned one of the few parliamentary governments remaining in post colonial Africa. The civilian elite had been faced with lagging agricultural production, falling market prices for Ghana's major export commodity (cocoa), a large trade imbalance, a massive foreign debt, and rising rates of inflation and unemployment. To help solve its economic problems, the government instituted a program of economic austerity and devalued the national currency by 44 percent. It also attempted to cut expenditures for the civil service, the police, and - a fateful step - the army.[7]

The relevancy of the above statement is not the military readiness to take over control of an already ailing situation, but rather the emphasis on the existing conditions, prior to that action, which make a country more vulnerable to any kind of revolt, despite whether it is from the right, the left, or the center.

Honduras, through its history, never experienced a relatively long period of economic growth, except for after the second world war when it enjoyed a brief periof of prosperity, due to an unprecedented improvement in the prices of its exports (mainly bananas) in the world market; but the rate of growth of its economy hardly equaled that of its rate of population growth. Moreover,

> Bananas constituted the largest proportion of its exports and although prices were relatively better at the time, the exploitation of this product was in the hands of the well-known banana companies.[8]

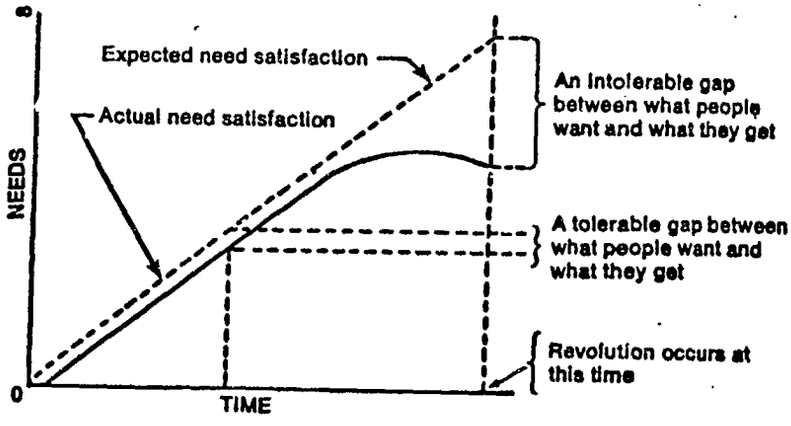
These two companies were the Standard Fruit Company and the United Fruit Company. Both United States multinational firms. As a result of this short economic boom, the relatively more developed countries like Guatemala, El Salvador, and Costa Rica began a process of industrialization and limited social reforms, while for Honduras the impact of prosperity was not as deep.[9]

Crane Brinton observes in his study of revolutions (English, American, French, And Russian), that although these societies were all prosperous, the governments were in financial straits; and economic leaders believed that "prevailing conditions limit or hinder their economic activity."[10] Reinforcing Brinton's observations, Leiden and Schmitt note "revolution is not made by the oppressed of society but by the rising or already successful operators who believe that further advance is blocked by existing conditions."[11]

James C. Davies defines the relationship between economic growth and violence in terms of a "J curve": revolutions are most likely to ocurr when a prolonged period of objective economic and social development is followed by a short period of sharp reversal.[12]

Davies further observes that constant misery is no more or less conducive to revolutionary behavior than is constant improvement of conditions; but it is rather the sudden gap between expectations and reality produced by cyclic downturn that dissipates confidence in the existing regime.[13] Moreover, Davies "envisages a point where anxiety and fear produced by sudden reversal of the improving trend becomes intolerable and the ensuing frustration makes the government a scapegoat."[14] (see Davies' J curve).

Figure 1 Davies' J-Curve of Revolution



Source: James C. Davies,"Toward a Theory of Revolution," The American Sociological Review, Vol. 27,(February,1962) p.6.

The present government of Honduras,then, sees as the centerpiece of its activities to develop the agricultural sector which focuses on human resource development;

institutional development and the improvement of lines of communication; strengthening of training in agriculture with emphasis on marketing problems; assistance to agricultural cooperatives including the construction of small scale infrastructure projects such as erosion control, irrigation and drainage systems; and assistance to the National Agrarian Institute in improving its administrative capabilities in the areas of identification of new lands, titling operations, beneficiary training and credit availability to agrarian reform beneficiaries.[15]

The government's capability to carry out these programs successfully will mark the starting point for the Honduran economy to begin to grow at a constant pace. The present condition, however and the

> constant preoccupation with the necessities of life often results in withdrawal from any important kinds of activities unrelated to staying alive. Far from making people into revolutionaries, enduring poverty makes for concern with one's solitary self or...family at best and resignation or mute despair at worst. Most people, too, prefer to keep their bondage to losing their lives. It is only when the bonds are loosened and when expectations are high for preserving their lives that people can think seriously of the luxury of a rebellion.[16]

The great majority of Hondurans are peasants that live in the rural areas. Peasants, whose bonds are very tied to the land and live isolated from the urban centers,

are "unlikely to be mobilized as leftist revolutionary followers insofar as...their property holdings are secure and provide them with economic self sufficiency".[17] Furthermore, "there is not more potent force for conservatism and the status quo than a self sufficient landowning peasantry".[18] Therefore, the government should devote some efforts to retain the peasantry in the rural areas by providing them with the means for agricultural development. This will prevent them from first, becoming a potential group of revolutionaries, and second, from immigrating into the urban centers where they will become urban slum dwellers and unskilled workers, and thus a major drain on the government.

With respect to the revolutionary potential from the urban environment, the very lowest social classes, again, are among the least likely to respond to appeals for revolutionary action, because

> extreme povery breeds apathy and social withdrawal, not political activism. The personal ties and extended family groupings of urban slum dwellers, for example, limit their mobility and independence, and they are the first to suffer from the disruption of municipal and welfare services that result from urban violence.... It is those workers who are skilled and who enjoy relatively higher income that appear to be the most susceptible to radical appeals.[19]

These appeals are most likely to come from revolutionary leaders on the left because the industrial working class

has been more prominent in leftist revolutionary movements.[20]

While economic crisis, by itself, is not an isolated accelerator which may bring about or "provoke collective violence with revolutionary intent",[21] other variables must be linked to the crisis. For example, the economy must be on the brink of total collapse, and most citizens must live on the margins of subsistence so that any increase in food prices or taxes, or the threat of famine and unemployment will raise the society's revolutionary potential.[22] Moreover, economic setbacks can seriously affect the government's performance on all of its functions, thereby making it more prone to suffer revolution.

> Economic crisis together with weak political institutions can raise the revolutionary potential of both agrarian and industrial societies. In the case of agrarian economies...the result is likely to be in terms of leftist revolutionary movements....[23]

The present government of Honduras, under Suazo Cordoba, will face both external and internal problems. The former will require an international effort to resolve, but the latter are his responsibility along. Therefore, he must (1) continue to improve the delivery of essential goods and services necessary for increasing incomes and employment opportunities within the less advantaged segments of the Honduran population; (2) Accelerate the development of information and more appropriate technology which can bring about rapid increases in income and employment; (3) improve his government's capability to identify increasingly important

difficult and sophisticated policy alternatives and to determine the likely costs and benefits of specific projects; (4) rationalize the use of hillside lands by improved systematic use of the forests thus stabilizing peasants now using slash and burn techniques; (5) increase access to productive land by decreasing the numbers of the landless poor while providing them with essential support services; (6) expand non-farm employment opportunities, mainly for landless laborers, subsistence farmers, and sharecroppers; and (7) Improve the quality of rural life, to include housing, environmental sanitation, vehicle access, schools, hospitals, and so forth...[24]

Honduras presently lives a decisive moment of its history. Its ability to successfully overcome the crises, now afflicting the neighboring countries will largely depend on the government's efforts in rapidly implementing those economic projects that are aimed to help the majority of its population. Finally, given the economic circumstances alone, Honduras does not seem vulnerable, as yet, to social uprisings with revolutionary intent.

The next section of this chapter will examine the government violence as a cause for potential revolutionary movements.

GOVERNMENT VIOLENCE

Government violence is justified when it is aimed at maintaining the internal law and order. However, most citizens in all societies establish a boundary which distinguishes legitimate from illegitimate government violence. The conception of this boundary varies from one citizen to another and it is closely related to "ideological orientation, socio-economic status, education, political experience, and the frequency of violence in the individual's social environment".[25] Government violence, then

> that appears to be arbitrary and indiscriminate tends to lower the government's legitimacy and raises the society's revolutionary potential. Those already committed to reform may be radicalized by government violence, especially when police brutality or military repression is experienced at first hand. And those citizens who are normally passive or politically apathetic may be politicized by government violence, which thus enlarges the number of activists and helps to alter their goals from reform to revolution.[26]

The recent United States Department of State report on human rights gave Honduras a favorable rating, as compared to that of Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala. Moreover, Honduras does not have a history of political assassination, military repression, torture and the like. The press reports widely any charges of police mistreatment. There are no political prisoners or death squads as in

some countries of the region. Freedom of press, speech, religion, and assembly are respected.[27]

Guerillas in Cuba, El Salvador, and Nicaragua all benefitted from the government troops who indiscriminately robbed, tortured, killed, and destroyed villages,[28] thus, making it easier for the guerilla leaders to increase the number of followers.

Honduras, in this respect, has kept its army's mission rather oriented towards the defense of its territorial sovereignty than to the oppression of its citizens. There is one case, however, where two army officers, along with some landowners, were involved in the murders of some peasant leaders and two foreign missionary priests. The leaders and the priests were planning a large demonstration to take place in the capital for the purpose of demanding lands from the government. The military officers responsible for the killings were actually tried, found guilty, and imprisoned in accordance with the civil laws of the land.[29]

In some neighboring countries, however, when officers are found responsible for violent ruthless actions, they are either sent abroad to an attache job or discretely retired from the army without being tried, still keeping their privileges and prerrogatives.

The relationship between government violence and

most types of political violence, Greene remarks,

> appears to be curvilinear: political violence increases along with government violence, until a threshold is reached where increased government violence coincides with a rapid decline in the collective violence of the citizens. This threshold...varies from one revolutionary event to another, and according to the intensity of the citizens' hostility for the regime. Their revolutionary potential, as well as the regime's capacity for counterrevolutionary violence, may in turn depend largely on the cohesion of the political elite.[30]

Although the government of Honduras and its armed forces have not played a repressive role against the population, we find occasional outbreaks of violence within the country. This violence is supported or influenced by neighboring states in conflict, mainly Nicaragua and El Salvador. It is manifested in the form of terror: kidnappings, bank robberies, hijackings, and bombing of government installation. It should be seen as an attempt to maintain alive the seeds of subversion in Honduras rather than as an indicator of a social movement, with revolutionary intent, on the part of the Hondurans. Consequently, "the principal function of terror, then, is to convince people that the revolutionary movement is powerful and that the power of the state is weak".[31]

Honduras has a legitimate government which was elected by its people. Therefore, it is the same people's

duty to either support it or provoke its fall; but the great majority of Hondurans seem rather supportive and sympathetic to the goals of the government, at least for the time being. Nothing can be more illustrative of this support than the following actions: on September 17, 1982, the subversive group Cinchoneros, or Popular Liberation Movement, conducted an audacious takeover of the San Pedro Sula Chamber of Commerce during a business meeting of over 150 businessmen representatives of all economic sectors of the country. The subversive group released the women and some old people, while it held 106 hostages to negotiate with the government. They demanded, among other things, (1) The withdrawal of Honduras from the Central American Democratic Communit, (2) The repeal of the anti-terrorist legislation, (3) The expulsion of foreign military advisors, and (4) The expulsion of the Somocista counter-revolutionary groups. While these demands were clearly propaganda rather than practical proposals, the government of Suazo Cordova firmly maintained its principle of "not negotiating with terrorists". But the reaction of the Hondurans is what has added significance to this action. There was little sympathy from the population; locally and nationally the business community, the labor and trade unions, and the press launched a strong campaign against the siege. Over

10,000 representatives of all sectors threatened to demonstrate against the guerillas, and to take the justice into their hands if the government did not react immediately; and finally, the four national daily papers plus several radio stations kept up a barrage of attacks against the armed left.[32]

On September 25, 1982, seven days after the take over, the hostages were released and the guerillas fled to Panama without achieving their objectives.

Guerilla activity in Honduras is at a very low level when compared with that found in El Salvador and Guatemala, but inevitably conflicts elsewhere have spilt over into Honduras. The two groups most involved in Honduras are the Cinchoneros or Popular Liberation Movement (MPL) and the Lorenao Zelaya or Popular Revolutionary Forces (FPR). Both groups have conducted isolated terrorist actions, but the government forces have been able to neutralize them with relatively little effort. Furthermore, they do not seem to coordinate their actions with each other nor do they command popular support, as yet, within the Honduran population.[33] Subversive movements, historically, have never been successful in Honduras.

Predictability of success is very hard to assess accurately, but "whatever the motivations, characteristics, or relationships...

> there is one common denominator that cuts across all successful revolutionary movements, whether of the left, center, or right. Revolutionary movements do not succeed where only the workers are mobilized, or only the peasants, or only the middle classes. They succeed only where a critical mass of most or all of the major classes in the society is mobilized in the revolutionary process.[34]

Castro's Success in Cuba was based largely on the support and sympathy of a broad sector of the population. The same can be said of the recent triumph of the Sandinistas in Nicaragua, but in both cases the revolutions were being fought against higly corrupt and repressive regimes which obviously added to its success. Generally,

> the weakness of guerrilla movements in Latin America since the high point of their activities between 1963 and 1965 ... may be explained in part by the apparent apathy, even hostility, of the peasantry to guerrilla organizers and insurrectionary adventure. The first mistake of the guerrilla revolutionary is also his biggest mistake: to assume, as did Che Guevara in Bolivia, that all that is needed for peasant-based re - volution is the presence of armed men preaching lib - eration from oppression.[35]

I have discussed, so far, (1) the economic conditions and (2) the government violence. Both as accelerators or

causes for the birth of revolutionary potential in Honduras. Obviously, many more causes can come to the mind and any further discussion would not assure completeness. Therefore, the extent to which any revolutionary event functions as an accelerator, Greene concludes, will depend on

> (1) The effectiveness of communications network, (2) the apparent success of the initial revolutionary event, (3) the cross-cultural relevance of the techniques and ideology characterizing the initial revolutionary event, and (4) the cross-cultural comparability of the "preconditions" for revolution.[36]

This implies that there are certain "preconditions" that must exist for any revolutionary movement to effectively develop. This is what the next section of this chapter will address.

PRECONDITIONS FOR REVOLUTION

GEOGRAPHY

The behavior of people and the development of their characteristics are shaped by the geographic factors in which they develop, whether it be jungle fastness or polar ice. "Geography is, then, the mother of history, as this finds its origin in a geographic womb and is nurtured by the environment."[37]

No other country of Central America is more ruggedly mountainous and geographically isolated than Honduras.

Its geographic separation from its neighbors and its rough geographical features have been determining barriers that prevented its participation in regional politics.[38] However,

> Invasions of bordering countries have been launched from Honduran soil...political exiles have flocked there through the years...before directing a counter-revolution in their own countries....[39]

However, the mountains inside Honduras are conducive to village isolation and intense local feeling. Transportation, while little improved, is still limited to the urban areas and some relatively large towns. Roads and railroad developments have been restricted by the dominant terrain features. Geography, then, plays a vital role in "structuring the communications network which, in turn, helps to determine the cross-cultural extent of the demonstration effect".[40] This effect refers to how prone the Hondurans may be to imitate the revolutions conducted in other countries, disregarding the constraints of the country's (Honduras) geography.

The geographic isolation of Honduras contributes to the failure of revolutionary movements insofar as they depend on external support for success.[41] Furthermore,

> where transportation routes develop is also where economic change is more rapid. Differential rates of economic development in turn heighten the hostility between different ethnic groups and socio-economic strata...the availability of mineral resources, the fertility of the soils, the export value of agricultural

> commodities, the proximity of transportation crossroads- all condition the pace of social change, and, consequently, the character of social conflict and revolutionary potentiial.[42]

The economic, political, and physical geography of Honduras play a determining role in the distribution and mobility of its population. Moreover, the potential for revolution arising from geographic conditions is very remote because it represents an obstacle for the development of insurgency.

LAND TENURE

Honduras is an agricultural based economy and as a consequence, a large percentage of its population depend directly on the land for their livlihood. Land ownership is a measure of wealth and status in an agrarian society. Therefore, socio-economic differences are much more visible in an agricultural society than in an industrial society.[43] Moreover,

> it certainly is no accident, then, that almost all of the revolutionary movements recorded by history have occurred in agricultural societies characterized by an an extremely unequal distribution of land.[44]

Land distribution problems and agrarian reform laws are not recent issues in Honduras. A tracing of the history of its agrarian legislation shows that there were early efforts, following independence from Spain, to promote a wider distribution of land ownership on an egalitarian basis.

The first land law of 1829 made possible the sale of former royal holdings to private citizens with a limit to the amount of land for individual purchase. In 1837 the government was permitted by law to give land in payment of loans to individuals and in payment of government salaries. Poor farmers could also get land more easily, and municipalities could have land grants. By 1872 there was a law that anyone working national land for three years could become the legal owner. In 1888 a system of title grants and surveys was instituted to facilitate selling government land to farmers. By 1924 the constitution incorporated a more comprehensive agrarian law which also made constitutional the previously legal methods of land acquisition. The land law of 1962 established fair land tenure and use systems, and included the creation of the National Agrarian Institute (INA). This law also provided for taxation on uncultivated land.[45]

The efforts from previous governments in the land distribution programs have proven to be beneficial to Honduras. The fruits of such efforts are being paid back with the country's relative stability. However, the most difficult issue facing the present government is not land distribution, but rather how to improve access to those lands now owned by the rural poor. Another problem which may have a great impacet on land distribution programs is that of the refugees now entering into Honduras from both Nicaragua

and El Salvador in an attempt to find a peaceful area and a piece of land for subsistence farming. How long will the government be able to support them? Additional land may be made available through such measures as drainage of large areas of cultivable land; levelling of land and development of potential irrigation; and colonization of new lands which are presently inaccessible.[46]

Land distribution in Honduras is, by far, more equitable than in other countries of Central America, and there still is available land to cope with the potential needs of the increasing population.

Tanter and Midlarsky conducted a study on land inequality for ten countries that suffered revolution between 1955 and 1960 with the same measure of land inequality for forty stable countries over the same period. They found that "revolutions occurred in those societies with a higher degree of land inequality".[47]

Therefore, land distribution inequalities may not be characterized as a significant factor for the development of revolution in Honduras.

FINAL COMMENTS

The threats that may arise from the conditions within Honduras have been analyzed in the previous sections, and I conclude that the potentialities for revolution there can be overcome successfully only if the Hondurans themselves, with the support of their government, are willing to confront the reality of the threat and are prepared to do something about it. The government must begin, then, with an open and honest approach, recognizing that the economic conditions of the country need some adjustments oriented to better serve the entire population, not just a minority; that urgently needed is a broad non-violent social revolution providing new welfare institutions, more educational facilities, tax reforms placing the burden on those most capable of bearing it, redistribution of land and limited land holding priviliges, improved health facilities, true electoral reforms, and universities divorced from political ideologies.

For a number of Hondurans, these reforms will be hard to accept for they will interfere with their vested personal interests. Those persons directly affected are likely to react negatively with strong and bitter protests and, perhaps undermine the government efforts. On the other hand, the implacability of progress and advancement cannot be contained by the protests of a small number of people.

Any attempt by the government to do so would raise the potential for internal war to such a degree from which it would be difficult to avoid bloodshed.

Certainly, it is true that Honduras cannot perform these tasks unaided. It will need the cooperation of its neighbors, the assistance of international organizations, and the active interest of the United States of America in maintaining stability in the region. Despite all these essential tasks, however, I feel there is another threat confronting Honduras which (given its foreign nature) will likely require an international effort to effectively avert. That threat is communist expansionism in the area which is exemplified by leftist Nicaragua to the southeast and potential Marxist-led insurgencies in El Salvador and Guatemala. That communist expansionism is a new force gathering power and adherents throughout Central America. Although not indigenous to the area, it is being skillfully orchestrated and adapted to the local situation. No longer merely a theory, this is a call to action.[48]

In conclusion, it is the firm conviction of the author that (because of recent initiatives, dedication to internal improvement projects, and the promise of adherence by the government to the domestic policies and practices recently established) there is no probability of revolution

from within. Honduran citizens now have faith that government policies are sound and feel their government is credible. They see their living conditions and promise for the future as considerably better than those of the citizens of neighboring countries. If, however, the government abandons or less aggressively pursues its forward-moving policies aimed at improving the living conditions of its citizens, Honduras may find itself a target for insurgency within the coming decade. The possibility of spillover of insurgency from neighboring countries, however, cannot be discounted.

NOTES

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[14]Hagopian, op. cit., p. 151

[15]Agency for International Development, op. cit., p. 35

[16]Leiden and Schmitt, op. cit., p. 43

[17]Greene, op. cit., p. 35

[18]Ibid, p. 36

[19]Ibid, p. 36

[20]Ibid, p. 37

[21]Ibid, p. 109

[22]Ted R. Gurr, Why Men Rebel, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), p. 131

[23]Greene, op. cit., p. 110

[24]Agency for International Development, op. cit., pp. 35, 36

[25]Greene, op. cit., p. 111

[26]Ibid, p. 112

[27]Agency for International Development, op. cit., p. 30

[28]Greene, op. cit., p. 112

[29]Major Chinchilla and Lt Plata were tried and imprisoned in 1976. It was clear that they were not carrying out orders of the government, but rather were acting on their own. The author witnessed these trials.

[30]Greene, op. cit., p. 113

[31]Ibid, p. 77

[32]Latin American Weekly Report, The Cinchoneros Raise the Stakes in Honduras, (Sept 24, 1982), p. 1

[33]Quarterly Economic Review of Guatemale, El Salvador, Honduras, (London, 3d Quarter, 1982), p. 21

[34]Greene, op. cit., p. 39

[35]Ibid, p. 81

[36]Ibid, p. 118

[37]Harvey K. Meyer, Historical Dictionary of Honduras, (New Jersey: The Scarecrow Press, Inc, 1976), p. xi

[38]John D. Martz, Central America: The Crisis and the Challenge, (North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 1959), p. 112

[39]Martz, op. cit., p. 112

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[42]Robert Melson and Howard Wolfe, Modernization and the Politics of Communalism: A Theoretical Perspective, (American Political Science Review, LXIV, 1970), cited in Greene's, op. cit., p. 121

[43]Ibid, p. 128

[44]Ibid, 0. 128

[45]Meyer, op. cit., pp. 3, 4

[46]Agency for International Development, op. cit., p. 38

[47]Raymond Tanter and Manus Midlarsky, A Theory of Revolution, (Journal of Conflict Resolution, XI, 1967), p. 277, cited in Greene's, op. cit., p. 130

[48]Kalijarvi, op. cit., p. 110

APPENDIX: TABLES

Currency: The currency of Honduras is the Lempira. Its exchange rate has been fixed at two to the US dollar since 1926.

NATIONAL ACCOUNTS

Table 1, Trend of Gross National Product and Gross Domestic Product.

Total (mn lempiras)	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980
GNP at current prices	2,475	2,965	3,460	4,094	4,807
GDP at constant 1975 prices	2,398	2,607	2,777	3,960	3,038
Real increase %	8.4	8.7	6.5	6.6	2.6
Per caput (lempiras)					
GNP at current prices	773	893	1,006	1,150	1,303
GDP at constant 1975 prices	749	785	807	831	823
Real increase %	4.6	4.8	2.8	3.0	-1.0

Source: Quarterly Economic Review, Honduras: Annual Supplement, 1982, p. 28.

Table II, Industrial Origin of GDP at Constant 1966 Prices

	1975		1980	
	mn lempiras	% of total	mn lempiras	% of total
Agriculture	378	25.9	491	28.2
Mining	33	2.3	30	1.7
Manufacturing	195	13.3	297	17.0
Construction	52	3.6	60	3.8
Electricity, gas & water	17	1.2	22	1.3
Transport, storage & communications	125	8.6	169	9.7
Commerce	147	10.1	201	11.5
Banking, finance & insurance	46	3.1	66	3.8
Ownership of dwellings	105	7.2	131	7.5
Government	49	3.3	74	4.2
Others	313	21.4	197	11.3
Total GDP at factor cost	1,460	100.0	1,744	100.0

Source: Banco Central de Honduras: UN Yearbook of National Accounts Statistics, Cited in Quarterly Economic Review, Honduras, Annual Supplement, 1982, p. 28.

Table III, Expenditure Generating Gross National Product (at current prices)

	1975		1980	
	mn lempiras	%	mn lempiras	%
Private consumption	1,734	80.2	3,396	70.6
Government consumption	278	12.9	682	14.2
Gross fixed capital formation	485	22.4	1,317	27.4
Increase in stocks	-75	-3.5	96	2.0
Exports of goods & services	680	31.5	1,858	38.7
less: imports of goods & services	-890	-41.2	-2,274	-47.3
Gross domestic product	2,212	102.3	5,075	105.6
less: net factor payments abroad	-50	-2.3	-268	-5.6
Gross national product	2,162	100.0	4,807	100.0

Source: IMF International Financial Statistics, cited in Quarterly Economic Review, Honduras: Annual Supplement, 1982, p. 29.

Table IV, Agricultural Production

('000 tons)

	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980
Bananas	1,200	694	1,188	1,300	1,403	1,300	1,330
Coffee	474	51	45	68	68	75	76
Cotton	5.0	3.0	6.9	10.2	9.0	8.0	6.0
Sugar	67	75	81	100	131	164	191
Maize	343	363	289	377	350	342	358
Sorghum	39	53	47	52	44	36	34
Dry beans	55	43	48	50	44	38	38

Sources: FAO, US Department of Agriculture, International Cotton Consulative Committee; Banco Central de Honduras; International Sugar Organisation, cited in QER, op cit, p. 30.

Table V, Agricultural and Food Production (1969-71=100)

	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980
Food production[a]	96	104	111	113	116
Agricultural production	99	108	121	124	126
Food production per caput[a]	79	83	86	84	83
Agricultural production per caput[a]	82	86	93	92	90

a. Excluding coffee

Source: FAO Production Yearbook, cited in QER, op cit, p. 30.

FINANCE

Table VI, Budget (central government only)

(mn lempiras)

	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981
Revenue	457.1	549.5	655.9	756.6	738.7
Expenditure	454.4	579.2	735.1	896.8	883.2
Balance	2.7	-29.7	-79.2	-140.2	-144.5
Financing:					
domestic	-15.9	139.8	102.6	16.1	132.4
external	22.7	38.6	13.7	124.1	12.1

Source: IMF International Financial Statistics, cited in QER, op cit, p. 32.

Table VII, Composition of Money Supply

(mn lempiras; end of period)

	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981
Currency outside banks	193.2	215.4	270.1	274.6	302.3
Demand deposits	214.2	257.4	270.0	323.1	327.9
Total	407.4	472.8	540.1	597.7	630.2

Source: International Monetary Fund, cited in QER, op cit, p. 33.

Table VIII, Consumer Prices

(1970=100)

	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981
All items	153.9	162.7	182.4	215.4	235.6
Food	168.5	178.9	199.2	233.2	250.2

Source: UN Monthly Bulletin of Statistics, cited in QER, op cit, p. 33.

FOREIGN TRADE AND PAYMENTS

Table IX, Foreign Trade
(mn lempiras)

	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980
*Exports, fob	783.7	1,008.7	1,193.7	1,465.0	1,612.5
*Imports, cif	906.2	1,161.7	1,400.7	1,663.9	2,036.9
Balance	-122.5	-153.0	-207.0	-198.9	-424.4
Volume of exports (1975=100)	121	125	139	165	152
Export prices (1975=100)					
Bananas (wholesale)	105	107	117	133	153
Coffee	196	401	315	255	308
Wood	112	125	140	148	158

Source: International Monetary Fund, cited in QER, op cit, p. 33.

Table X, Main Commodities Traded
(mn lempiras)

Exports	1979	1980	Imports	1979	1980
Bananas	399.7	441.3	Machinery &		
Coffee	393.7	408.2	transport equipment	494.2	600.0
Refrigerated meat	121.5	121.5	Manufactures	508.5	557.7
Timber	84.1	72.4	Fuel & fuel oils	226.0	342.3
Sugar	26.9	58.7	Chemical products	275.5	308.2
Silver	34.3	56.0	Food products	113.3	171.2
Shellfish	48.5	46.8	Edible oils & fats	13.7	23.3
Cotton	22.6	26.9	Non-comestible		
Zinc	21.9	22.4	raw materials	19.2	22.2
Lead	33.0	15.9	Beverages & tobacco	10.3	8.8

Source: Banco Central de Honduras, cited in QER, op cit, p. 34.

Table XI, Main Trading Partners

(% of total value)

Exports	1978	1979	Imports	1978	1979
CACM	8	8	CACM	14	12
of which:			of which:		
Costa Rica	2	2	Guatemala	6	6
Guatemala	4	4	Costa Rica	4	3
Nicaragua	2	2	Nicaragua	4	2
USA	...	57.5	USA	...	41.9

Sources: Banco Central de Honduras, Boletin Munsual Estadistico; UN Monthly Bulletin of Statistics, cited in QER, op cit, p. 34.

Table XII, Balance of Payments

($ mn)

	1977	1978	1979	1980
Exports, fob	529.8	626.1	750.1	834.6
Imports, fob	550.1	654.5	783.5	955.9
Exports of services	63.9	80.4	102.7	119.9
Imports of services	186.7	226.6	288.3	339.8
Transfers	14.1	17.2	20.5	21.5
Balance on current account	-139.0	-157.4	-198.5	-319.7
Private long term capital Official long term capital	148.7	175.6	156.9	211.9
Short term capital	52.8	-21.3	68.3	16.9
Errors & omissions	-6.1	12.5	-16.5	-15.1
Counterpart to SDR allocation			4.6	4.7
Other assets & liabilities	...	...	10.2	28.6
Change in reserves (-indicates increase)	-66.3	9.5	-25.0	73.0

Sources: Boletin Estadistico Mensual, Banco Central de Honduras; International Monetary Fund, cited in QER, op cit, pp. 34-35.

Table XIII, Trend of Gold and Foreign Exchange Reserves

($ mn; end of period)

	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981
Gold[a]	1.7	2.2	4.3	7.3	5.0
SDRs	4.3	3.8	10.1	0.03	1.06
Foreign exchange	175.5	172.4	191.1	149.80	99.4
Total	181.5	178.4	205.5	157.1	106.0

a. End year holdings valued at 75 per cent of fourth quarter London prices.

Source: IMF International Financial Statistics, cited in QER, op cit, p. 35.

Trble XIV, External Disbursed Public Debt

($ mn; end of year)

	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980
Bilateral official	30.4	32.8	41.1	46.6	64.0
Multilateral	191.4	238.4	312.0	374.2	476.4
Suppliers	13.0	19.7	18.7	15.5	21.3
Financial lenders	30.3	66.0	95.4	158.8	165.1
Total	344.0	457.5	595.1	751.4	892.1

Source: World Debt Tables, World Bank, cited in QER, op cit, p. 35.

TABLE XV,THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE:

PRESIDENTS FROM 1824 to 1982 AND DATE OF

ASSUMPTION OF POWER

Herrera, Dionisio	September	16,	1824
Milla, Jose Justo	March	10,	1827
Bendeno, Cleto	September		1827
Zelaya, Jose J	October		1827
Bustamenta, Miguel E	November	5,	1827
Morazan, Francisco	November	27,	1827
Zelaya, Jose J	June		1828
Vigil, Diego	June	30,	1828
Morazan, Francisco	December	2,	1929
Arias, Juan A	December	24,	1829
Morazan, Francisco	April	22,	1830
Valle, J., Santos del	July	28,	1830
Marquez, Jose Antonio	March	10,	1831
Milla, Francisco	March	22,	1832
Rivera, Joaquin	January	7,	1833
Ferrera, Francisco	September	24,	1833
Rivera, Joaquin	January		1834
Ferrera, Francisco	September	20,	1834
Rivera, Joaquin	November		1834
Bustillo, Jose Maria	September	10,	1835
Rivera, Joaquin	October		1835
Martinez, Jose Maria	December	31,	1836
Herrera, Jose J	May	28,	1837
Martinez, Jose Maria	September	3,	1838
Matute, Lino	November	12,	1838
Molina, Juan F. de	January	9,	1839
Medina, Felipe N	April	13,	1839
Alvarado, Jose	April	15,	1839
Guerro, Jose Maria	April	28,	1839
Garriga, Mariano	August	10,	1839
Bustillo, Jose Maria	August	20,	1839
Consejo de Ministros	August	27,	1839
Zelaya y Reyes, Francisco	September	21,	1839
Ferrera, Francisco	January	1,	1841
Consejo de Ministros	January	1,	1843
Ferrera, Francisco	February	28,	1843
Consejo de Ministros	October		1844
Ferrera, Francisco	November		1844
Consejo de Ministros	January	8,	1845
Chavez, Coronado	January	11,	1845
Consejo de Ministros	January	1,	1847
Lindo, Juan	February	12,	1847
Bustillo, Felipe	September	21,	1847
Lindo, Juan	December	8,	1848
Gomez, Francisco	February	1,	1852
Cabanas, Trinidad	March	1,	1852
Gomez, Francisco	May	9,	1853

Table XV (continued)

Cabanas, Trinidad	December 31, 1853
Bueso J., Santiago	October 18, 1855
Aguilar, Francisco	November 8, 1855
Guardiola, Santos	February 19, 1856
Montes, Francisco	January 11, 1862
Medina, Jose Maria	February 5, 1862
Castellano, Victoriano	February 1862
Montes, Francisco	December 4, 1862
Medina, Jose Maria	June 21, 1863
Inestroza, Francisco	January 1, 1864
Medina, Jose Maria	February 15, 1864
Gomez, Cresencio	May 15, 1865
Median, Jose Maria	September 1, 1865
Gomez, Cresencio	October 2, 1865
Medina, Jose Maria	February 1, 1866
Lopez, Juan	May 27, 1867
Medina, Jose Maria	November 21, 1867
Consejo de Ministros	May 1868
Cruz, Francisco	September 5, 1869
Medina, Jose Maria	January 14, 1870
Rodriguez, Inocente	1871
Xatruch, Florencio	March 26, 1871
Medina, Jose Maria	May 17, 1871
Rodriguez, Inocente	July 2, 1871
Medina, Jose Maria	October 20, 1871
Gomez, Cresencio	April 5, 1872
Arias, Celeo	May 12, 1872
Leiva, Ponciano	November 23, 1873
Medina, Jose Maria	December 16, 1875
Zalada, Jose Maria	January 13, 1876
Leiva, Ponciano	February 3, 1876
Mejia, Marcelino	June 8, 1876
Gomez, Cresencio	June 13, 1876
Consejo de Ministros	August 12, 1876
Medina, Jose Maria	August 16, 1876
Soto, Marcos A	August 27, 1876
Consejo de Ministros	June 10, 1880
Soto, Marco A	September 30, 1880
Consejo de Ministros	May 9, 1883
Bogran, Luis	November 30, 1883
Consejo de Ministros	August 30, 1884
Bogran, Luis	November 17, 1884
Leiva, Ponciano	March 21, 1885
Bogran, Luis	June 27, 1885
Leiva, Ponciano	April 15, 1886
Bogran, Luis	August 28, 1886
Leiva, Ponciano	November 30, 1891
Aguero, Rosendo	February 9, 1893

Table XV (continued)

Vasquez, Domingo	April 18, 1893
Bonilla, Policarpo	February 22, 1894
Sierra, Terencio	February 1, 1899
Consejo de Ministros	December 30, 1903
Arias, Juan A	February 18, 1904
Bonilla, Manuel	April 13, 1904
Consejo de Ministros	February 25, 1907
Davila, Miguel R	April 18, 1907
Bertrand, Francisco	March 28, 1911
Bonillo, Manuel	February 1, 1912
Bertrand, Francisco	March 21, 1913
Membreno, Alberto	July 28, 1913
Bertrand, Francisco	February 1, 1916
Consejo de Ministros	September 9, 1919
Bogran, Francisco	October 5, 1919
Lopez Gutierrez, Rafael	February 1, 1920
Consejo de Ministros	March 10, 1924
Tosta,Vicente	April 30, 1924
Paz Baraona, Miguel	February 1, 1924
Mejia Colindres, Vicente	February 1, 1929
Carias A., Tiburcio	February 2, 1933
Galvez, Manuel	January 1, 1949
Lozano Diaz, Julio	January 15, 1954*
Military Junta	October 21, 1956*
Villeda Morales, Ramon	December 21, 1957*
Lopez Arrellano, Oswaldo	October 3, 1963**
Cruz, Ramon E	June 1, 1971**
Lopez Arrellano, Oswaldo	December 4, 1972**
Melgar-Castro, Juan A	April 30, 1975**
Military Junta	August 7, 1978**
Paz Garcia, Policarpo	April 1, 1980**
Suazo Cardoba, Roberto	January 27, 1982**

Source: William S. Stokes, Honduras: An Area Study in Government, (New York: Profile Press, 1950) pp 329-331.

* These data were extracted from the Historical Dictionary of Honduras by Harvey K. Meyer.

** These data were extracted from the personal records of the author who witnessed those changes.

TABLE XVI, ANALYSIS OF DECREES

PASSED FROM 1896 to 1936

Years	Total Number of Decrees Passed by Congress	Number of Decrees Proposed or Inspired by the Executive	Percentage of Decrees Proposed or Inspired by the Executive	Percentage of Executive Decrees Approved by Congress
1896	101	18	17.8	100
1897	144	20	14	100
1898	221	14	6.3	100
1899	211	20	9	95
1900	160	22	12	84
1901	152	17	11	100
1902	126	16	12.7	100
1903	43	8	18	86
1904	70	49	70	96
1906	51	30	60	100
1907	65	34	52	100
1909	33	8	24	[illegible]
1910	146	47	32	[illegible]
1911	89	13	14.6	[illegible]
1912	124	58	47	95
1913	122	58	47.5	95
1914	125	48	38.4	96
1915	106	45	41.5	100
1916	152	45	30	98
1917	158	40	25	98
1919	148	17	12	100
1920	108	28	26	97
1921	113	31	27	97
1922	136	29	21	97
1923	132	29	22	79
1924	43	15	35	74
1925	140	79	56	74
1926	128	54	42	85
1927	145	44	30	80
1928	118	51	43	94
1929	176	98	56	91
1930	235	48	20	92
1931	222	51	23	63
1932	151	42	28	98
1933	241	50	21	96
1934	176	37	21	87
1935	212	55	26	91
1936	124	48	39	94

Source: William S. Stokes, Honduras: An Area Study in Government (New York: Profile Press, 1950) pg. 332

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